

WORLD TRADE NEWS

Bulgaria nears agreement on joint venture deals

BY STEPHANIE GRAY IN PLOVDIV

BULGARIAN enterprises are expected to sign four agreements under the country's much vaunted joint venture legislation before the end of the year, and negotiations are continuing on a further 20 to 30 contracts, according to the Bulgarian Industrial Association.

The four all but settled partnerships are believed to be for production of electronic equipment and for the setting up of companies to operate in third countries. But, with negotiations at such an advanced stage, details of foreign shares and repatriation of profits arrangements were unavailable.

The joint venture mechanism, unmatched by any other Eastern bloc state, was announced a year ago as "joint production association."

Offering, in the theory, the opportunity for up to 99 per cent foreign participation, it raised considerable interest among companies seeking access to the Comecon market and was the subject of a decree by the state council in April.

Motivation for such a move, aside from the perennial hard

currency deficit problem, is the need for expertise in high technology both to boost industrialisation and improve Bulgaria's performance as the state responsible for supplying the rest of Comecon with electronic products.

However, the scheme has failed so far to allay some of the scepticism of many Western businessmen. While there have been many assurances, some British companies exhibiting at last week's Plovdiv International Trade Fair remained to be convinced about provisions for repatriation of profits in hard currency.

They also had reservations about the quality of Bulgarian production, the veto power to be exercised by the Bulgarian partners and the slowness of decision-making.

For their part, the Bulgarians maintain that some of the capitalist enterprises have been interested in the mechanism purely as a means of dumping their elderly and obsolete machinery.

Nevertheless, West Germany, the country's most important

Western trading partner, is particularly interested in taking advantage of the new system. Bonn has sought government-to-government agreement guaranteeing West German interests under the legislation. However, in an initial move, Bonn presented a checklist to the Zhivkov Government "many months ago" and is still awaiting a response.

The Bulgarian Industrial Association, which is to co-ordinate proposals, maintains that the mechanism has been in operation for only six months. It is too early to expect firm results. Much research is still needed and, being new to the business of arranging such partnerships, any ventures must be approached with caution.

In spite of the problems, however, the opportunities for the West are undeniable. Apart from access to Comecon markets, especially in electronics, the possibilities of using Bulgaria's considerable political and business prestige in third markets like Syria, Libya and Iraq remain significant.

Australia, U.S. closer to anti-trust accord

By Paul Chesswright

THE AUSTRALIAN and U.S. Governments have edged closer to a bilateral agreement designed to avoid friction on anti-trust matters.

Negotiations have been taking place since the summer following private actions in the U.S. against Australian uranium companies and a U.S. Justice Department investigation involving Australian shipping lines.

Senator Peter Durack, the Australian Attorney-General, said in Canberra yesterday that he had just received a letter from Mr. Benjamin Civiletti, his U.S. counterpart, fortifying him in his view that an agreement would be of the greatest importance.

An agreement would lay down a framework for consultation about the national interests involved before court proceedings are started. The agreement could become a model for other countries to follow.

Mr. Civiletti's letter and the talks which preceded it mark an attempt to reduce the tension arising from attempts to assess U.S. anti-trust jurisdiction outside U.S. borders, sometimes at the expense of the sovereignty of other nations and of foreign companies.

Tension climbed when Westinghouse Electric accused CRA, Mary Kathleen Uranium, Pancontinental Mining and Queensland Mines—all Australian companies—among 29 U.S. and foreign uranium producers of being involved in a cartel and sought treble damages.

Treble damages involve compensation for injury multiplied to include a penal element. In the Westinghouse case, the Australian companies with others from the U.K., Canada and South Africa were all acting within their domestic laws and were operating outside the U.S.

The current talks between the U.S. and Australia have, at their heart, the desire to ensure a mutual respect for national sovereignty.

But, Senator Durack said, "Questions of sovereignty or comity between nations should not bludge upon the decisions of private litigants whether plaintiff or defendant."

WORLD OIL SUPPLIES

War strengthens Mexico's hand

BY WILLIAM CHISLETT IN MEXICO CITY

THE WAR between Iraq and Iran, two major oil producers in the volatile Middle East, is strengthening the hand of Mexico as it pushes ahead with its novel policy of linking oil sales to general economic co-operation.

Mexico, now the world's fifth largest oil producer with production of 2.4m b/d, is a secure source and the country is not a member of OPEC, two increasingly important factors for oil importing nations as they look to the uncertain future of oil supplies.

To the question "What is the price of a barrel of oil?" Mexico is replying that it is worth more than the prevailing market rate. And there is no doubt that the war has given the question a fresh urgency.

In the last two years, Mexico has burst on to the oil scene and made a significant impact on the world oil market.

And since it is now generally acknowledged that Mexico has the potential to be one of the world's top producers in the next decade oil importers are looking more and more to the country for long-term supplies.

Given the fact that Mexico has a strong oil card to play, the country's actual and potential clients are already finding that the new investment-linked policy, quietly initiated in the summer, requires more than lip-service.

Like it or not, Japan, Canada, France and Sweden, the main buyers of the policy, are learning that Mexico exports more than \$34.50 a barrel, its current export price, for a firm commitment.

The U.S., however, which is

Mexico's major export client, is not included in this policy because Mexico wishes to diversify away from its large dependence upon its giant northern neighbour into Far Eastern and European markets.

The U.S., anyway, has said that it will not buy the policy and regards oil sales as a straight commercial matter.

Mexico intends to sell its oil to those countries which not only pay the going rate but are also willing to invest in priority areas, such as in agroindustry, offer technological expertise and ease the way for Mexico's non-oil exports.

"What we are saying is come and participate in the growing Mexican economy," said a Trade Ministry official.

"Look at what the Saudis are doing," he said, referring to the idea mooted by Saudi Arabia that Western oil companies, which take equity stakes in large Saudi refinery and petrochemical projects, might get an extra 500 b/d for every \$1m they invest.

The Mexican economy is already overheated from the sudden flood of petrodollars. The Government believes that its policy will enable it to better weather the problems of petrodollar inflation, since increased investment in certain areas will boost the country's productive capacity and, therefore, its ability to absorb usefully its oil revenue.

But in return for investing, no changes at all are envisaged in the foreign investment policy which restricts participation to 49 per cent.

Critics of the policy ask how

Mexico can wield the oil weapon successfully when it has boxed itself into a corner by saying that it will limit oil production to 2.7m b/d, its current platform.

Mexican officials say that the more Mexico is able to handle its petrodollars productively, the better position it is in to increase oil production.

Japan's arm is being twisted the most in this policy, which involves a strong element of

Finally, agreement was reached last month between Kobe Steel and Sumitomo to set up two specialised joint venture projects. But there is still no written agreement that Japan will receive its extra 200,000 b/d.

But in the case of Canada and France the issue is less clear. Canada has only got a promise of 50,000 b/d instead of the expected 100,000 b/d with any more linked to increasing its small presence in Mexico—its \$100m investment represents 1.9 per cent of total foreign investment.

There has been a sudden upsurge in Canadian trade missions and Canada is holding out its Candu nuclear technology as the answer to Mexico's desire to build up a nuclear industry. Canada has the advantage that it uses natural and not enriched uranium, and Mexico has plenty of its own uranium.

France, meanwhile, is somewhat bemused by the policy. Mexico is preparing a project for its consideration, but it has not yet divulged what it will be.

Second, Japan, by virtue of its acute reliance on the Middle East, is most anxious to plug itself into the Mexican oil supply. It has a contract for

100,000 b/d and wants 300,000 b/d as soon as possible and so is more susceptible to the Mexican policy.

The debate between the two sides has been intense.

Mexico requested Y100bn (£197m) concessionary financing for the expansion of its Sieris steel mill and Japan has only offered Y33bn plus an extra Y200bn from its export-import in less favourable conditions.

Japan made the offer on condition that it got the bulk of the \$2.2bn (£234m) Sieris project. Mexico wants several countries involved.

MEXICO'S CUSTOMERS 1981	
Country	B/D
U.S.	733,000
Spain	248,000
Japan	150,000
France	100,000
Central America	80,000
Sweden	70,000
Canada	50,000
Brazil	50,000
Israel	45,000
India	20,000
Yugoslavia	3,000
Total	1,561

Source: Pemex and Oil Industry sources.

Big aluminium expansion seen

BY ROY HODSON

STRONG CONFIRMATION that the major aluminium producers expect the 1980s to provide the best profit levels in their histories came from senior officers of Kaiser Aluminium in London.

Kaiser considers the western world industry has the financial capability to support a \$58bn capital programme during the decade—\$42m for new plant capacity and \$16m for modernisation of plants and energy-saving improvements.

Mr. J. G. Churchill, Kaiser's Treasurer, International Operations, said: "Since we expect a good economic environment for our industry we think it is reasonable to expect a very good return on funds invested in the business. A good rate of return will generate adequate profits, which in turn will provide a large portion of the funds needed to finance the industry's capital requirements."

Mr. William Hobbs, Kaiser's vice-president and treasurer, forecast that a 15 per cent return on invested capital "could reasonably be ex-

pected" throughout the aluminium industry while the capital spending envisaged would allow the industry to expand production at a rate of about 4 per cent a year.

Mr. Hobbs believes the industry will be able to finance the major portion of the expansion from retained earnings. He said the decade should show good earnings performances due principally to a balance between supply and demand which would be favourable to the producers, and would result in strong prices.

The near \$80bn 10-year Western world aluminium programme predicted by Kaiser takes account of the current round of alumina and smelter developments in Australia, together with smaller additions to capacity in the traditional aluminium producing areas, and some new plants in other parts of the world where cheap power can still be found.

Within the industry there are growing expectations that the Australian aluminium boom will be followed by investment

during the second half of the 1980s and beyond in South America—mainly in Brazil.

Kaiser estimates that the cost of building new greenfield capacity for the industry will be about \$3,000 (at 1980 prices) for each annual tonne of finished aluminium metal capacity. That figure includes the opening of new bauxite mining, construction of a new alumina refinery, building a new primary metal smelter, and adding fabricating plants to use the metal.

There is not likely to be a shortage of bauxite or alumina production during the 1980s. The industry's main concern is that the long lead times involved in building some smelters, and the problems of finding smelter sites with matching power supplies, could cause bottlenecks in metal production.

Kaiser is forecasting that on at least a similar scale most new smelters will be undertaken as joint ventures between international companies.

SHIPPING REPORT

VLCC rates cut

BY OUR SHIPPING CORRESPONDENT

THE WAR between Iraq and Iran continues to overshadow the world's shipping markets. Dry cargo rates have generally held relatively steady, but bunker prices are rising because of the fighting, and ship owners are becoming nervous.

The market for very large crude carriers (VLCCs), the major carriers of Gulf crude, has seen a slump in rates over the past 10 days. Reduced oil supplies from Iran and Iraq have led to a drop in demand for VLCCs, and rates for the Gulf/Europe voyage have dropped from Worldscale 45 a

fortnight ago to Worldscale 30. Shipbrokers Galbraith Wrightson estimate in their latest tanker market report that something like 8m tons a month has been lost from Iraq's Gulf ports alone—equivalent to 32 VLCCs.

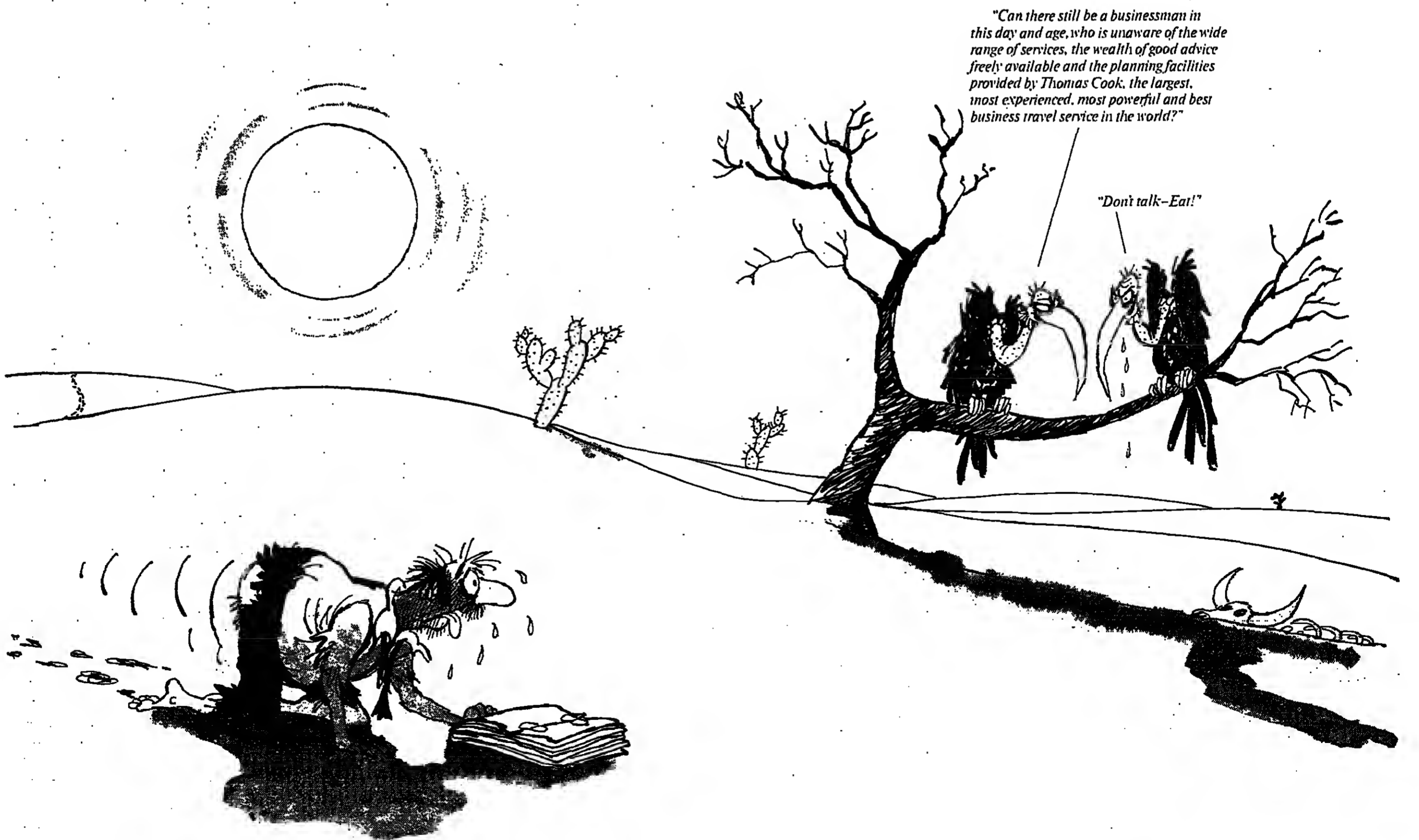
Although other countries have increased production somewhat, the falling number of tankers needed has added to the chronic surplus of VLCC tonnage.

In the dry cargo markets, there is no sign yet of combination carriers (capable of carrying oil and dry bulk cargoes) flooding back into the market

WORLD ECONOMIC INDICATORS

		UNEMPLOYMENT				
		Sept. 1980	Aug. 1980	July 1980	June 1980	May 1980
U.K.	000s	2,037.0	2,001.0	1,896.6	1,864.0	1,864.0
	%	8.4	8.3	7.3	7.3	7.3
U.S.	000s	8,019.0	8,207.0	8,066.0	8,149.0	8,149.0
	%	7.6	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.7
W. Germany	000s	865.0	853.2	781.4	799.0	799.0
	%	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.1
Holland	000s	261.5	248.3	221.8	218.0	218.0
	%	6.1	5.8	5.2	5.3	5.3
France	000s	1,374.0	1,330.1	1,296.2	1,405.9	1,405.9
	%	6.1	5.9	5.8	6.1	6.1
Belgium	000s	417.0	397.4	335.7	381.0	381.0
	%	10.4	9.9	8.4	9.5	9.5
Italy	000s	1,671.0	1,681.5	1,710.8	1,571.0	1,571.0
	%	7.4	7.6	7.8	7.1	7.1
Japan	000s	1,120.0	1,050.0	1,090.0	1,160.0	1,160.0
	%	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.2	2.2

Source for EEC countries: Eurostat



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UK NEWS

Guy de Jonquieres lists the ingredients which have soured Kenwood's recipe Export setbacks add to blend of distress

HARRY TRUMAN, the former U.S. President, once observed that if you can't stand the heat, you should get out of the kitchen. For Kenwood, Britain's biggest manufacturer of food preparation equipment, the aphorism strikes uncomfortably close to home.

For the past year, the company has suffered a remorseless economic squeeze. Normally one of the most profitable parts of Thorn Domestic Appliances (TDA), its sales and margins have fallen sharply and short-term borrowings have risen rapidly.

Kenwood's main plant at Havant, near Portsmouth, has been on short-time working since May and a smaller factory at Weymouth, Dorset, will close in mid-December. So far about 400 workers have been made redundant, and the number is due to grow to 750 by the end of the year, roughly a third of the total labour force.

Kenwood, if it survives, may emerge a leaner company. But overhauling is not its main problem. Indeed, the management believes that the current shock treatment could impair longer-term productivity.

Keith Miller, TDA's chairman, is in no doubt about the prime cause of the company's woes. He blames the Government's economic policies, particularly the high exchange rate. Kenwood exports about 40 per cent of its production. But in some overseas markets the rising pound rate has added as much as a third to its prices in the last year.

The company's dilemma is summed up by the offer earlier this month by the 260 workers at its Weymouth plant to take a £10 per week pay cut to keep the factory open. But during August the rise in the exchange rate had already wiped out the savings which Kenwood would have made in a whole year if the offer had been accepted.

Its export problems have been made worse by a collapse of demand in Denmark and Sweden, traditionally two of its biggest markets, due to the stringent deflationary policies in force there. It is also worried by an influx of East German-made food mixers into EEC markets which, the company says, are being sold at far below economic prices.

At home its sales, like those of most other domestic appliance manufacturers, have been weak since late last year, when the usual pre-Christmas buying spree failed to materialise. As a result, its own and dealers' stocks began to mount alarmingly. By late March, emergency action was imperative.

At first, the company tried to promote sales, offering cash rebates to retail customers. It succeeded in clearing stocks, now at their lowest for many years. But the tactic proved expensive and failed to generate enough demand to prevent sharp cuts in output, now at about 60 per cent of capacity. Only a couple of years ago, it was close to 100 per cent.

The management admits that it derived production cuts for as long as possible "because we never thought things could get this bad." It also seems concerned for its predominantly female workforce, towards whom its attitude is somewhat paternalistic. Where possible, it has relied on natural wastage rather than on forced redundancies.

Its employees, about half of whom are union members, appear remarkably loyal to the company and its products. Few seriously dispute the management's assessment of its financial position, and over the past two years they have accepted pay settlements totalling only 23 per cent, well below the rate of inflation.

This moderation is a mixed blessing. While it has kept payroll costs in check, it means that Kenwood's wage levels have

fallen behind those of other local employers. Some who have left for jobs elsewhere have been skilled staff, who may be hard to woo back when times improve.

The company's suppliers, most of whom are UK-based, have been hard hit by the recession. Mr. Denis Cockram, manufacturing director, says many have cut their prices to the bone to attract business. Some are clearly submitting distress bids, and Mr. Cockram is worried about how much longer they can survive.

Kenwood has frozen indefinitely the bulk of new capital investment plans. Frills

—at about double the UK retail price. Kenwood is also pressing ahead with a £1m plan to double its marketing and distribution network in France and hopes to benefit from a growing U.S. appetite for sophisticated home cooking. "For us, France should really just be an extension of the Southern Electricity Board area," says Mr. Miller.

The timing could have been better. Consumer spending in both France and the U.S. remains weak, with few signs of an early upturn. A more fundamental question is why Kenwood waited until now to beef up its sales effort in these markets.

The answer seems to be that, until recently, it had felt no compelling need to do so. For many years it has enjoyed bulging order books, particularly for its Chef mixer. The machine is the flagship of a product line which includes blenders, toasters, electric stewpots, kettles and deep fryers.

But the volume of Chef sales has stagnated for the past three years, after reaching a peak in 1977-78. Kenwood says the Chef is still supreme in its field, but it appears to have lost ground to compact food-processors like the French-made Robot-Coupe, whose ease of use is a strong selling point.

Kenwood tacitly acknowledges the food-processor challenge by marketing under its own name two models imported from Japan. It plans to start manufacturing one of its own designs which, it says, will be superior to anything now available. As a relatively late entrant into the market, however, its success is not assured.

The company is reassessing some other planned products. It says the strength of sterling has brought into question the economics of launching into fresh markets where there is already strong competition from foreign-made products.

Kenwood says it has managed to hold on to its share of most of its existing markets, though

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WRESTLING WITH RECESSION

It is coy about giving precise figures. There is some cold comfort in the fact that few competitors are faring particularly well and some, such as Moulinex of France, are encountering serious problems.

The company is operating on the assumption that business conditions must improve, though it can see no break in the clouds yet. "Mrs. Thatcher is attacking so tenaciously to her policies that there is a danger that there won't be any industry left to revive," says Mr. Miller bitterly.

But it is worried that the scare of its current ordeal will blight its business. Skilled workers have left, inhibiting its ability to expand output quickly. The speed of expansion will also be governed by the state of its suppliers, two of whom have gone into liquidation in the past few months.

Arguably most critical of all, the moratorium on capital spending is unlikely to help Kenwood improve its long-term competitive position. "We can increase output by hiring more labour," says Barry Dodd, finance director. "But without investment in plant, there is unlikely to be a significant increase in productivity."

BA studies heliports for big city centres

By Michael Donne, Aerospace Correspondent

BRITISH AIRWAYS, which is buying six 44-passenger Boeing Chinook helicopters for its North Sea operations, is studying the possibility of purchasing a bigger 68-passenger version.

Captain Jack Cameron, managing director of British Airways Heliports, says that this developed version of the Chinook could be available by 1984 (the smaller 44-seater enters service this winter).

It would be capable of carrying passengers on routes from London to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and the Channel Isles.

"No longer will the travelling public have to fight their way through overcrowded airports to reach destinations less than 200 miles away," he said.

"This naturally brings up the question of heliports in, or convenient to, city centres. In London, there is a site three miles from the City in the West End Dock. This site has, or will have, excellent road and underground communications. It is large enough to cope with the expected demand between the mid-1980s and the end of the century."

"Such a scheme will assuredly bring prosperity to the area which is at present in great depression. This heliport could cope with up to 80 passengers a year."

Captain Cameron says the bigger, 68-passenger helicopter would also be of benefit to internal routes.

Britannia Airways, the independent UK holiday flight operator, is buying U.S. General Electric engines for its new fleet of Boeing 767 new-technology airliners.

Britannia has ordered two 767s, with an option on three more aircraft, with delivery starting in 1984. The engines will be GE's CF6-80A's of 43,000 lbs thrust each. The value of the deal, if the options are exercised, is about \$50m (£21m).

Tourism campaign

SCOTLAND is missing out on the American holiday market, according to Mr. Alan Devereux, chairman of the Scottish Tourist Board. Speaking in Houston, Texas, at the start of a Scottish tourism sales mission to the U.S., he argued that a potential visitor "has to be a Sherlock Holmes to get information."

There has been a long campaign within Scotland to divorce its foreign tourism promotion from the British Tourist Authority. Mr. Devereux's remarks might be seen as fuel for this campaign.

£1m factory

WORK starts in Northampton today on a new £1m factory to build toy trucks for the U.S. company Fisher-Price. It will be completed next year, with a workforce of more than 80.

Open minds

MR. CHARLES HAUGHEY, the Dublin Premier, who is to meet Mrs. Thatcher soon for talks on Ulster, stressed yesterday that his Government was ready for new ideas on the crisis.

He told a meeting in County Donegal a few miles from the Irish border: "Our minds are not closed to any realistic proposals or suggestions. His Government was ready to adopt 'an open and imaginative approach' in constitutional and legislative fields."

Cuts sought

BIG SAVINGS in Government, including the abolition of the Civil Service Department and 10 per cent staff reductions, are sought by Mr. Cyril Taylor, a Conservative Member of the Greater London Council.

Pension delay

THE GOVERNMENT is to delay this year's pension rise by a further week. Sir George Young, Under-Secretary for Health, says in a letter to Mr. Ben Ford, Labour MP for Bradford North, that the delay until November 24 is one of a number of "very unpalatable decisions" the Government North, that the delay to Mr. has had to take.

Pension rates are to go up from £23.30 a week to £27.15 for a single person and from £27.30 to £43.45 for a married couple.

Blast shelter

LONDON'S FIRST communal nuclear fall-out shelter is being built in Chiswick to house up to 55 people—with space being offered at £1,300 a head.

"This is to protect people who have paid for places," said Alguard Shelters. "We don't want people trying to push their way in if there is a nuclear blast."

'Money growth aim unrealistic'

FINANCIAL TIMES REPORTER

INCOMPATIBLE Government policies are the cause of the UK's current monetary problems, say stockbrokers Phillips and Drew in the latest edition of the firm's "Economic Forecasts."

It says that the 7 to 11 per cent a year target for sterling M3 growth was "never really a practicable possibility, given the Government's early decisions to double VAT and retain the Clegg Commission, which ensured that public sector pay kept up with that in the private sector."

"These decisions helped boost the rate of inflation to over 21 per cent and the demand for money followed the price level upwards. In these circumstances, any serious attempt to impose 11 per cent monetary growth on the economy, whether through even higher interest rates, or more public expenditure cuts, would have resulted in an intolerable number of bankruptcies and redundancies. An already deep recession would have been exacerbated to an extent that would have wished to tolerate."

Phillips and Drew explain how the operation of the "corset" restrictions on money supply growth disguised the incompatibility of different policy objectives. "The mounting demand for money, which was basically generated by rising inflation, was channelled into the Euro-dollar market, and into acceptance credit. It therefore failed to appear in the official M3 statistics until the 'corset' was lifted in June."

However, the stockbroking firm argues, it is unfair of Ministers to blame the Bank of England for the "corset" distortions. "Because of the lack of up-to-date information about the Euro-sterling market, there was virtually no way that the Bank, or anyone else in the City, could have obtained accurate data."

In any case the "corset" was not responsible for the fundamental problem. Given the high underlying inflation rate, the problem sprung from setting an unrealistic M3 target.

Phillips and Drew reckon that the annual growth rate of M3 will probably remain about 15 per cent to the end of 1980, subsiding to slightly under that by next April. It expects the authorities to re-estimate the February 1980 base for the M3 guideline to take account of distortions due to disintermediation, and to extend the 7-11 per cent growth range to October 1981.

Over the months ahead, M3 would be a poor guide to policy. "Rising unemployment, the strong exchange rate and hopes of wage moderation are likely to encourage the authorities to reduce M3 further before the end of the year."

Next year, the contending recession is likely to allow additional cuts in M3. But a firmer interest rate trend could well be established by the first half of 1982 as economic activity recovers and inflationary pressures persist.

Cut-price coach fares law in force today

BY ANDREW TAYLOR

LEGISLATION WHICH has already prompted an airline-style price war between private and nationalised coach operators comes into force today.

The 1980 Transport Act extends considerably the freedom of private coach operators to compete with public transport on national and local bus routes.

National Express, part of the state-owned National Bus Company, has already introduced cheap standby fares on more than 70 routes as part of its campaign to stave off cut-price competition from private operators.

The scheme was introduced last month following the announcement of a new fare structure by British Coachways, a consortium of private operators led by the Grey-Green bus company.

From today, British Coachways plans to run services from London to a number of provincial centres. Its tariffs include a £2 single fare to Birmingham. Under the terms of the law, which received Royal Assent in July, the traffic commissioners will no longer be able to prevent private operators from competing on national routes provided safety standards are met.

The Act also removes restrictions on private companies seeking to compete with council-run services on local routes. The legislation provides for trial areas to be established where private coach companies will be free to run services without a licence.

The Act is intended also to promote car sharing schemes. These are already permitted under previous legislation—but from today, vehicle owners and operators are allowed to advertise sharing schemes. Restrictions on commuters forming their own coach-hiring clubs are lifted.

These developments are likely to hit both National Bus Company and British Rail services. BR recently announced a new campaign to attract travellers by cutting the cost of its Family Travel Card from £16 to £5.

The National Bus Company has warned that cut-price competition could lead to the axing of a number of uneconomic routes which, in part, have been subsidised by fares on the more profitable services.

Rising prices 'drive beer drinkers from the pub'

BY ARTHUR SANDLES

RISING PRICES are driving the British beer drinker away from the pub, according to the drinking press's pressure group, Camra, the Campaign for Real Ale.

"The simple equation of high prices meaning fewer customers drinking fewer pints has struck home," says Camra. It says beer prices have risen four times in just over a year and in the past two months most major breweries have put up prices by as much as 5p a pint.

Pub landlords are realising that if beer prices continue to

increase at the present rate they will be in a disastrous position. Beer consumption is down 14 per cent compared with last year, says Camra.

A nationwide survey by Camra found landlords angry about a supermarket price war leaving them at a disadvantage.

Mr. Brian Beard, a London pub landlord, is quoted as saying: "It is about time the breweries got their heads out of the sand. If they want pubs to survive they will have to have a rethink. I have seen five licenses go bankrupt in the past year."

Election pledge 'not kept'

BY ANDREW TAYLOR

THE GOVERNMENT has been accused by construction industry employers of failing to live up to its election pledge to trim the public sector and stimulate private enterprise.

Mr. Jack Seeley, vice-president of the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors said: "Some form of stimulation is essential to allow the private sector to expand and to take up some of the unemployment currently making headlines."

Mr. Seeley, speaking to federation members in Manchester, attacked the Government's record on its promise to cut back the public sector. "The fact remains that reductions in the staff of local councils have so far amounted to only 21,000

full-time workers out of 2.5m employed. He also accused the Government of failing to introduce adequate measures to ensure free competition between private contractors and direct labour organisations employed by local authorities.

He said that a highway work the Government had proposed that only contracts worth more than £100,000 should be subject to competitive tendering.

Mr. Seeley said that despite strong protests from construction employers some local authorities were still writing provisions into contracts "which effectively impose a trade union closed shop on contractors working for them."

CORRECTION NOTICE

We apologise for the incorrect information published in the World Value of the Dollar Table on Friday October 3rd. Amended Table appears on page 27.

The last conversion.

Introducing the B 5900. Your low-cost opportunity to switch to Burroughs and put an end to software conversions.

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Burroughs

UK NEWS

LABOUR

Manning dispute hits Tyne rescue

BY OUR SHIPPING CORRESPONDENT

MR. ROBERT BUTLER, who heads successful Glasgow ship repairers Clydeside Engineering, has abandoned plans to reopen the Tyne Dock Engineering ship repair yard because he has been unable to reach agreement with the unions involved.

Mr. Butler had planned to employ 50 men initially and build up to 250 in a year's time. Tyne Dock had stopped trading in March with the loss of 350 jobs, and Mr. Butler's plans seemed the only hope for saving the ship repair facility.

He had hoped to repeat his success with Clydeside, which he rescued from bankruptcy, and has now built up into an operation employing more than 300 and making profits of £300,000 on a turnover of £4.6m.

However, the unions on Tyne-side have balked at the manning conditions which he has insisted on before reopening the yard.

Speaking from Glasgow yesterday, Mr. Butler said: "We have done a good job up here and we know the terms and conditions on which we can make Tyne Dock work. If I was to accept the Tyne conditions, it would be irresponsible."

Mr. Butler used to head British Shipbuilders ship repair side before branching out on his own.

His terms are understood to have included a flexibility of labour clause, a refusal to guarantee employment at the yard for a year, and an unwillingness to take on casual labour for a minimum of five weeks.

Mr. George Arnold, Tyne area chairman of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said yesterday that Mr. Butler was being unreasonable.

"We are not Luddites," he said. He added that if Mr. Butler opened on Tyne-side on his terms then up to 1,000 other ship-repair jobs could be in jeopardy.

Mr. Butler said that this comment was a "terrible admission" and implied that his operations were 20 times more efficient than those of existing ship-repair yards on the Tyne.

"There is no way I can reopen Tyne Dock Engineering under the same terms that apply in other yards on the river," said Mr. Butler. But he was prepared to look at the proposition again if there was a change of heart by the unions.

Industrial action in prisons to go ahead

By Our Labour Staff

PRISON OFFICERS are due to begin disruptive industrial action today over a long-standing dispute involving a claim for meal-break payments.

Mr. Peter Rushworth, deputy general secretary of the Prison Officers' Association, said yesterday the union had received no further communication from the Home Office during the week-end and the planned action would therefore go ahead.

Mr. William Whitelaw, Home Secretary, again ruled out the chance of the dispute going to arbitration when questioned before the week-end.

Association officials would not reveal the precise nature of the action due to start today, so that the Home Office could not prepare proper contingency plans to counter it.

Mr. John Bartell, acting chairman of the association, said yesterday the action was aimed at Home Office administration and finances.

It is believed it could include a refusal to supervise work involving outside contractors and work on prison farms.

Key talks on Times' computer plans

BY JOHN LLOYD, LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

TALKS TOMORROW between the management of Times Newspapers and officials of the National Graphical Association are likely to usher in the introduction of computerised printing in the group—two years after the beginning of the abortive year-long closure which was aimed at achieving it.

Mr. Dugal Nisbet-Smith, managing director of Times Newspapers will meet Mr. George Jerrom, the NGA's national officer with responsibility for Fleet Street, to iron out a few remaining problems," as Mr. Jerrom put it yesterday.

Both men believe that an agreement will be signed to allow the first TNL publication to adopt computerised typesetting—the Times Literary Supplement—to go live "within days."

Thereafter, says Mr. Nisbet-Smith, the extension of computerised systems to the remaining supplements, to The Times and the Sunday Times should proceed "fairly smoothly."

However, the changeover to computerised systems from existing "hot metal" technology will be largely on the union's terms.

The management sought through the stoppage to establish the principle of editorial and advertising staff "keying in" their copy to the computer, thus cutting out the compositor.

That principle was dropped, and a two-year moratorium has been put on further discussions.

The discussions tomorrow will centre on agreements which TNL would like to see signed in the machine and stereo departments, where the management wants to ensure continuous and efficient handling of the computer-set material produced by NGA members in the composing room.

The NGA has already agreed the major part of the deal, which "buys out" the piece-work of its 149 compositors.

They will transfer from rates which could give them over £300 a week to a flat rate of £227.50 a week after receiving sums varying from £4,000 to £19,000, depending on length of service.

Once this agreement is completed, negotiations will begin on TNL's 12.5 per cent pay offer to its 3,500 printing and clerical staff.

In August, TNL paid its 500 journalists an annualised 18 per cent increase (21 per cent over 18 months) after a one week strike.

The print unions, which have put in claims for substantial increases, have continued negotiations over the offer while insisting it must be considerably improved.

Mr. Nisbet-Smith described it as "somewhat like BL's 6.1 per cent offer—more than we can afford, but we haven't said its final."

Agricultural workers may merge with TGWU

By Our Labour Staff

PRESSURE is growing in the ranks of the agricultural workers' union to resolve the union's present financial difficulties by an amalgamation with Britain's largest union, the Transport and General Workers.

The National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers has called an emergency meeting for next month to put to members the union executive's proposal for a 40 per cent increase in subscriptions.

Farm workers are among Britain's lowest-paid. Basic pay rose above £50 only in the last pay round.

Union leaders will meet this week with senior Bowater management to discuss the disclosure by Ministers to unions last week in a Downing Street meeting that "tens of millions of pounds" were available to help the company, which plans to close its Ellesmere Port plant.

Meetings of union branches at the London Evening News, which is due to be closed at the end of the month, begin today to consider responses. Unions also hope to secure a joint meeting with representatives from both Associated Newspapers and Express Newspapers.

Manual workers 'suffer lower sick pay'

BY ERIC SHORT

THERE IS a consistent pattern of discrimination by employers against manual workers in the provision of sick pay schemes, according to a Labour Research Department survey of sickness benefit.

The survey was carried out in association with the Transport and General Workers Union, the Amalgamated Engineering Workers, and the General and Municipal Workers' Union.

The LRD analysed 414 sick pay schemes covering about 9m employees in every sector of the economy.

On average, this shows that in many schemes manual workers had to serve longer periods to qualify for the benefit, had to be off work for more days to receive the benefit, got less uncertificated leave and shorter overall entitlement, and received a smaller proportion of their normal earnings while sick.

The LRD believes this is unjustifiable and scandalous. The handbook also details

the current levels of sickness benefit under the present Social Security system and describes the Government's plans for making employers responsible for paying the first eight weeks of sickness.

LRD adds its voice to the TUC and individual trade unions in bitterly criticising the Government's proposals.

It says that not only will they dismantle the social security system, but also involve a sharp drop in sick pay for the most vulnerable of employees and make backward employers even more reluctant to employ the disabled.

The only guarantee of income security during illness is a good negotiated sick pay scheme.

Sick Pay—A Negotiator's Guide from the Labour Research Department, 78, Blokhof Road, London SE1 8HF, price £1 per copy to trade unions and labour organisations and £25 to others.

Motor Show launch for Peugeot diesel

BY KENNETH GOODING, MOTOR INDUSTRY CORRESPONDENT

PEUGEOT HOPES to revive its flagging fortunes in the UK with the launch at the Birmingham motor show next week of a range of 305 estate cars, including a medium-sized diesel estate for the first time.

The UK estate car market is the largest in Europe. Last year's sales of estates accounted for 12 per cent of total new car registrations, or about 200,000 vehicles.

This compared with 120,000 or 8 per cent of the French market, 135,000 or 5 per cent of the market in Germany and

Britain have fallen twice as fast as the overall market, and are likely to be 25 per cent down at the year-end—from 40,000 to 30,000.

One reason is that the 305 saloon, when it was first introduced to the UK, was overpriced. Peugeot has held the price for some months as other manufacturers increased theirs and as inflation took its toll—so that Mr. Hassid believes that now the price is where it should be.

The group's estate car sales have dropped, and will probably be down from 9,000 to 5,000 this year. The reason is that the 304 estate is ageing, and potential customers know the 305 replacement would not be long in coming.

Ford sold 75,000 estates last year, BL 35,000, Datsun 15,000, Volvo 11,000 and Talbot and Vauxhall 10,000 each.

Even before the decision to combine the Peugeot and Talbot sales networks in Europe, Mr. Hassid forecast that Peugeot's sales of estates in the UK would bounce back to 9,000 next year—as a result of the introduction of the 305 estate range.

Prices start at £4,575 to £5,250 for the petrol-engined versions, and £5,320 for the diesel estate—the only second medium-sized diesel estate on the British market, the other being the Volkswagen Passat LD estate.

More UK news

Page 25

suggests that this country leads Europe in estate car sales because "most of the British live in the country while most continentals live in town."

However, the British dog lover also has an influence. Peugeot's research shows that 24 per cent of the owners of its estates have dogs, and the company has a profitable sideline selling an annual 6,000-7,000 dog guards for fitting in the estates.

This year, Peugeot's sales in 14,000 or 1 per cent of the market in Italy.

Mr. Henri Hassid, Peugeot managing director,

Poster monopoly report is postponed until May

BY OUR CONSUMER AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE Monopolies and Mergers Commission has been given extra time to complete its investigation into roadside poster advertising.

The investigation, launched two years ago, should have been finished this autumn, but the commission has now been given until next May to complete its report.

Extensive delays in investigations by the commission are now becoming usual for full-scale monopoly inquiries although the first of the new

Competition Act investigations—into British Rail's commuter services in the south-east—was completed in a record five months.

This report, published last week, was also the longest ever produced by the commission.

Apart from other investigations under the Competition Act—into the electricity and water industries—the commission is shortly to be asked to carry out monopoly inquiries into the car spares industry and the milk distribution system in the UK.

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How many firms have been bitten by that one? Finally, there's no danger of you being cleaned out by the continual costs involved in the laundering of service cloths.

Quite simply, Kimwipes Wipers provide safer, cleaner, more agreeable factory conditions. Without eating away the company's profits.

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For details of our trial offer and a copy of Simple Solutions, our guide to hygiene & safety at work, write to Kimberly-Clark Ltd., Dept. FT 610, Industrial Division, Larkfield, Maidstone, Kent ME20 7PS.

Technical Page

EDITED BY ARTHUR BENNETT AND ALAN CANE

SECURITY

Keeps unwanted guests at bay

THE UBIQUITOUS microprocessor is once more brought to bear, this time in two security control equipments launched by Cardkey Systems of Reading, subsidiary of the U.S. corporation of the same name.

There is a growing acknowledgement by equipment makers of all kinds that their traditionally fixed-function systems, be they scientific instruments or cash registers, can be made startlingly versatile by using the software approach.

It is worthwhile restating what this means: that instead of the device being permanently wired (or even mechanically arranged) to behave always in the same fashion when some stimulus or another is applied, with a microprocessor and suitable software its behaviour can be nicely matched to the prevailing circumstances. And if those circumstances change, the program can be altered to suit.

Examples are now coming to the attention of the Technical Page on a daily basis, but so far distressingly few of them have been of UK origin.

Cardkey's new Dimension 1000 however has been entirely designed and built in the UK for worldwide sale and it is hoped that the more sophisticated model 2000, at present coming from California, will soon be made here too.

Sophisticated access systems in which personnel entry point devices are on line (continually exchanging up to the minute information) to a central point have been controlled by microcomputers and even larger machines for some time, particularly in military installations. As a result of the frequently technical user

environment, however, they have often not been too easy to use. Cardkey is aiming at people with administrative rather than engineering or data processing backgrounds with the two new models.

The central unit resembles a desk-top calculator in size and appearance but can deal with entry and exit of up to 3,000 people through eight card-reading terminal points: the user must present his properly coded card to a unit to get in or out. Who can, or cannot get in or out at any moment is under software control and there can be up to eight categories or levels for the various restricted areas.

The eight access terminals can themselves be linked to doors, turnstiles, parking barriers and so on—each of them can accept eight alarm inputs of this kind.

All the transactions are monitored by the microprocessor according to its program and they are printed out on a 21 column ticket-roll printer built into the desk-top console. The machine can also deal in four times zones: if an employee tries to get in to the building or area at the wrong moment, access will be denied.

Dimension 2000 is a good deal more complex in that the central unit has a display screen able to show pictures from closed circuit cameras placed at strategic points while at the same time superimposing plain English instructions for dealing with various situations.

This system can deal with 4000 cards used at 32 card reader points and at the same time monitor 700 alarm inputs.

GEOFFREY CHARLISH

Smart torpedos get an underwater 'taxi'

David Fishlock, Science Editor, reports on a torpedo to test torpedos

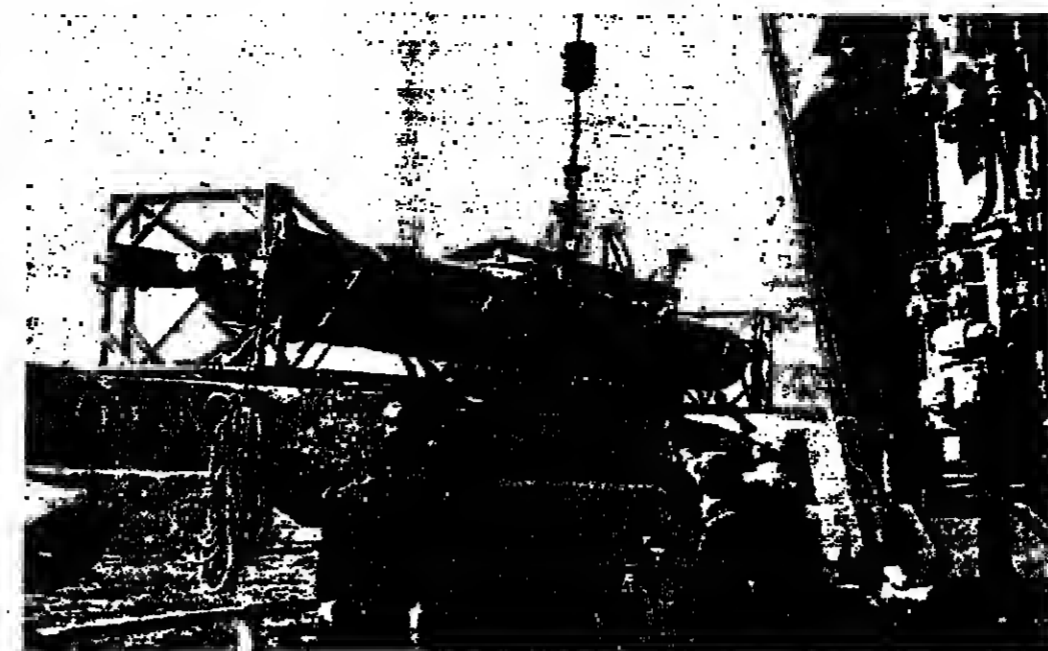
A TORPEDO-LIKE test vehicle controlled by computer has been developed by the Ministry of Defence to explore new ideas in anti-submarine weapons and warfare. The all-purpose test vehicle, called TVX, is being prepared for its first sea trials later this year.

TVX will be used to test parts of the controversial Sting Ray lightweight torpedo, the "smart" anti-submarine weapon the Navy and Air Force plan to put into service in their frigates, Nimrods and anti-submarine helicopters. It will also be used to test future developments for heavyweight torpedos of the kind carried by submarines, including a new model the Defence Ministry is exploring.

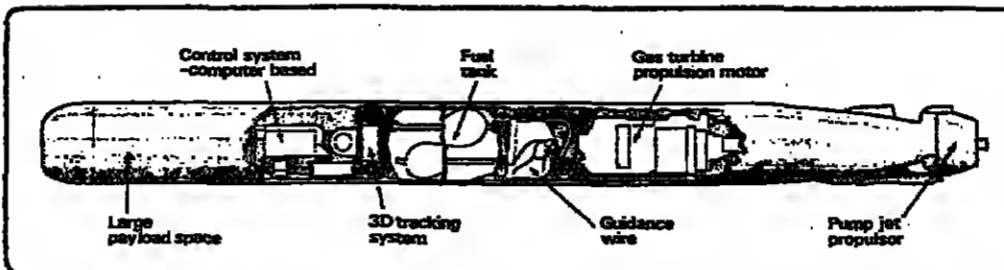
TVX is the brainchild of the Weapons Laboratory of the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment at Portland near Weymouth. It has been developed over the last four years at a cost of "a few million pounds," says Miss Betty Killick, in charge of the laboratory. The scientists have acquired the Meccano-like hardware for three TVXs but plan to assemble only one at a time. Sperry Gyroscope has been the prime contractor.

TVX is a "taxi" the size and shape of a heavyweight torpedo (see accompanying sketch). It is 0.33 metres in diameter, five metres long, and weighs 1,150 kilograms. Instead of a payload it has a large luggage compartment in the nose for experimental payloads of almost any aspect of torpedo research—homing, fusing, attitude sensing systems, for example. It can also test new propulsion systems for torpedos, by replacing the appropriate part of the basic TVX assembly.

The need for TVX reflects a growing awareness of the Russian submarine threat, as their submarines—noisy and relatively easily detected—become much faster yet quieter and altogether greatly improved in performance, the Portland scientists say. Their taxi is designed for speeds at least half



TVX in its launch cradle being lowered from a research vessel prior to sea trials



What makes TVX run: test equipment is carried in the nose

as fast again as the fastest craft a torpedo is expected to pursue. Its speed can be varied between about 25 and 60 knots through remote control of its gas turbine engine and jet-pump propulsion system.

A scientist drives TVX from a computer console aboard the launch vessel. TVX's own on-board computer controls its speed, attitude and safety factors. It has its own three-dimensional tracking system and can carry data recorders, although normally it will be transmitting data continuously

through its guide wire for real-time analysis back aboard the mother vessel.

The taxi is highly manoeuvrable, and can be controlled very accurately, claims Portland. It boasts rates of turn up to 40 degrees per second and pitch angles of 25 degrees. Its range of 7.3 kilometres is limited either by fuel supplies or by the guide wire running out. It is positively buoyant by 40 kilograms, and floats horizontally to assist recovery. It operates at depths from 5 to 300 metres—the limit

available on torpedo ranges open to TVX.

Following "dry runs" in test cells at Portland, where its propulsion system was proven, TVX has been tried out at the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC), the Ministry of Defence's new torpedo testing range on the inner Sound of Rasay, between the Scottish mainland and Skye. Should TVX fail to surface, BUTEC is equipped with a curious beast called "cutlet," a self-propelled "bedstead," also developed at Portland, which locates and recovers test torpedos from the seabed for another go. The subterranean range, measuring ten by four kilometres, is wired for sound so that the whole exercise can be watched on sonar display screens from the shore.

Normally TVX is deployed from a vessel. Under its own power it swims out of the opal-lattice launch cradle (shown in the photograph) at a depth of three metres. After a test run TVX should surface under its own buoyancy and be located with the aid of dead reckoning via its own control computer. It also has a "beeper" locator on board. The crew of a Gemini dinghy then attach a tow line and take it back to its mother vessel.

The phone number of Omron Terminals of New Malden was incorrectly given in an article on this page on Friday last. The correct number is 01-949 1032.

thurley

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COMPUTING

Terminal for many tasks

NCR HAS come to the market with a microprocessor-based visual display terminal that can be programmed by the user to handle a variety of information processing tasks. Called model 2850, it can be used on its own or linked to a host computer. NCR's object has been to provide the precise combination of processing power and control features where they are needed. The system has a buffered 12 inch screen and 105 keys including a separate numeric pad. All of the keys are programmable and as a result the keyboard can provide over 300 functions, symbols or pre-set constant values. The customer himself can program 27 of the keys using Basic in order to provide 105 special functions or procedures. NCR is at 206 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 6LY (01-733 7070).

BUSINESSMAN'S DIARY

UK TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

Date	Title	Venue
Oct. 7-8	Bookmakers Show (07349 6255)	Bloomsbury Centre Hotel
Oct. 8	Petroleum Oil and Offshore Equipment Exbn. (01-637 8841)	Tree Tops Hotel, Aberdeen
Oct. 12-15	Junior Fashion Fair (01-638 1833)	Horticultural Halls, Brighton
Oct. 14-15	Internecon Conf. and Exbn. (01-390 0251)	Metropole Hotel, Brighton
Oct. 14-17	Drive Electric Exhibition (01-834 2333)	Wembley Conference Centre
Oct. 14-17	Mailing Efficiency Exhibition (01-465 6283)	Canard Int. Hotel, W8
Oct. 15-26	International Motor Show (01-235 7000)	National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
Oct. 21-23	Conference and Exhibition on Marine Transportation and Storage of Bulk Chemicals (0237 76363)	Royal Lancaster Hotel, London
Oct. 21-24	European Offshore and Petroleum Conference and Exhibition (01-486 1951)	Earls Court, Olympia
Oct. 21-24	London Fashion Exhibition (01-385 1200)	Wembley Conference Centre
Oct. 23-30	Electronic Test and Measuring Instrumentation Exhibition (0822 4671)	Metropole Hall, Brighton
Oct. 23-30	National Housing and Town Planning Exhibition and Conference (01-688 5741)	Harrrogate
Oct. 23-30	Control and Instrumentation Exhibition (01-855 7777)	Olympia, Kensington New Town Hall
Nov. 4-6	Computer Peripheral and Small Computer Systems Exhibition and Conference (01-837 3836)	Olympia, Kensington New Town Hall
Nov. 4-9	Kensington Antiques Fair (04563 22563)	Paris

OVERSEAS TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

Date	Title	Venue
Current	International Motor Show (until Oct. 12) (01-439 3964)	Paris
Oct. 8-9	Hydraulic Pneumatic and Transmission Exhibition (01-950 2207)	Lille
Oct. 9-15	International Exhibition for Instrumentation and Automation—INTERKAMA (01-469 0858)	Düsseldorf
Oct. 10-12	International Children's and Young Peoples Fair (01-409 0956)	Cologne
Oct. 12-16	Fashion—Samples Fair—INTERCHIC (01-540 1101)	West Berlin
Oct. 14-18	Business Machines and Equipment Exhibition (01-486 1951)	Helsinki
Oct. 15-18	Electrical, Mechanical and Civil Engineering Exhibition (Dublin 763871)	Dublin
Oct. 18-22	International Exhibition of Women's Readymade Clothing (01-439 3964)	Paris
Oct. 19-23	Hotel Equipment and Catering Exbn. (01-584 4411)	Vienna
Oct. 22-24	Hong Kong Electronics Show (021-705 6707)	Hong Kong
Oct. 23-29	International Exhibition of Inventors and Novel Features (01-278 0231)	Bruno
Nov. 8-16	International Boat Show (01-540 1101)	Copenhagen
Nov. 9-14	Middle East Building Materials and Construction Industry Exhibition (01-486 1951)	Bahrain

BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT CONFERENCES

Date	Title	Venue
Oct. 6	Oyez: Why don't the British buy British? (01-242 2481)	Quaglino's, SW1
Oct. 6-7	UNCTAD: Containerisation and the Developing World (01-253 1333)	Hilton Hotel, W1
Oct. 6-10	Inst. Personnel Management: Selecting the Right Candidate (01-587 2844)	Whites Hotel, W2
Oct. 7	CAET: Company Law Up-date (01-580 7179)	Hotel Russell, WC2
Oct. 7-9	Inst. Civil Engineers: Coastal Discharges—engineering aspects and experience (01-222 7722)	1-7 Gt. George St., SW1
Oct. 8-9	FT Conference: Spain and the Common Market—Policy and Alternatives (01-621 1355)	Medrid
Oct. 8-10	Frost and Sullivan: Office Automation and the Integration of word processing and data processing (01-486 8377)	Imperial Hotel, Copenhagen
Oct. 8-10	Seminar Services International: Advanced International Tax Planning Symposium (01-370 3244)	International Hotel, Zurich
Oct. 8-10	Infotech: Which IBM Small Computer? (0628 39101)	Portman Hotel, W1
Oct. 9-Dec. 11	FT City Course (01-621 1355)	City University, EC2
Oct. 9	Executive Quality Circles—theory and application (0494 33171)	Crown Hotel, Harrrogate
Oct. 9-10	AMD: Import Documentation and Finance (Windsor 85047)	Royal Garden Hotel, W1
Oct. 9-10	Brunei: Womenpower (0858 80461)	Uxbridge
Oct. 10	Henry Stewart: Computers for Surveyors and Estate Agents (01-935 2382)	Café Royal, W1
Oct. 10	Oyez: Securities for Bankers' Advances and Receivables in the 1980s (01-242 2481)	Cavendish Conference Centre, W1
Oct. 13-14	MSS: Computer and Business Consultancy: Job Evaluation (0903 34785)	Worthing
Oct. 14-15	AMR International: Foreign Exchange Forecast (01-262 2732)	Hyde Park Hotel, SW1
Oct. 16	IPS: Currency Differentials—A route to more profitable purchasing (0960 23711)	Kenilworth, Warwickshire
Oct. 16	Keazny/SMMT: Vehicle of the future—threat or opportunity? (021 6223195)	Metropole Hotel, Birmingham
Oct. 20-21	New York Management Centre: Direct investment in the U.S. (01-937 3163)	Hilton Hotel, W1

Anyone wishing to attend any of the above events is advised to telephone the organisers to ensure that there has been no change in the details published.

Financial Times Conferences

INVESTMENT IN MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur—November 3 and 4, 1980
Y. A. B. Dato Seri Dr. Mahatir bin Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry, will give the keynote address at this major conference to be arranged in association with Bumiputera Merchant Bankers Berhad with the support of the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority.
Official Carrier: Malaysian Airline System

RETAIL BANKING

Grosvenor House, London—November 18 and 19, 1980
A two-day conference to explore opportunities in retail banking, particularly in the United Kingdom personal banking market where between 40 and 50 per cent of the adult population still lacks a cheque account.
Speakers will include: Mr. W. J. Benson, Director and Group Chief Executive, National Westminster Bank Limited; Mr. F. W. Crawley, Deputy Chief General Manager, Lloyds Bank Limited; and Mr. Daniel Cardon de Lichthner, Administrateur, Membre du Comité de Direction, Banque Bruxelles Lambert SA.

All enquiries should be addressed to:

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مكتبة النخيل

Building and Civil Engineering

£7.8m shops centre by Wimpey

CONSTRUCTION of a shopping centre at Westley, Swindon, Wiltshire, is to be carried out by Wimpey. Preliminary work for this £7.8m contract has just started and completion is scheduled for 1981.

This shopping centre is being built for Linford and will provide the core of a new district centre to be known as the West Swindon Centre. Principal

feature of this 6,500 square metre complex will be 13 shops in what is described by Wimpey as a mall/town square setting, and a sales hall for a Carrefour superstore.

A further 6,500 square metres covers two bulk storage warehouses, rear preparation area, first floor restaurant, kitchens, servicer and external kiosks. The main structure will be

More work at London Heathrow

A START on improvement of facilities for passengers arriving at London Heathrow's Terminal 1 is being made today.

The terminal will be extended out towards the Queens Building at first floor level and Immigration and Health Control will be housed in the new area.

Space vacated on the ground floor will be used to extend the baggage reclaim hall and install larger baggage reclaim units.

Chief architect is the Archer Boxer Partnership.

Bovis burrows under Bristol

BOVIS, which has driven over 21 km of tunnels under the City of Bristol over the past 30 years has got another contract calling on its expertise in working beneath the city.

The latest contract is worth over £5.7m and is for stages two and three of the Bristol southern foul water interceptor.

This job calls for the construction of 614 metres of 2.74 metres internal diameter tunnel and a 2,393 length of 2.44 metres internal diameter tunnel, both with segmental primary lining and in-situ concrete secondary lining.

A further 297 metres long and with a 1.2 metre internal diameter is also called for.

Back on the surface Bovis has won a £4.25m contract to build the Bathbridge by-pass in Essex.

The work consists of the construction of 2.4 kilometres of single carriageway road; the site is on the existing A130 Chelmsford to Canvey Island road, which runs approximately

15 kilometres south of Chelmsford.

The work includes two bridges, one over the River Crouch and another over the Wickford-Southminster railway line. Each bridge will have three spans with M-beam decks supported on reinforced concrete piers and bank seat type abutments founded on bored piles.

The work is to last 120 weeks; the works engineer is the County Surveyor G. Carpenter.

Headquarters for rail union

A NEW headquarters building for the National Union of Railmen is to be built at Euston Road, North London, under a contract worth more than £4.5m awarded to John Laing Construction.

Work has just started and involves filling old basement areas, excavating for a new basement, then constructing a mainly six-storey reinforced concrete framed building on pile foundations around a

central courtyard. Clad in granite, the fully air-conditioned block will have a floor area of about 86,000 sq ft. It is due for completion in two years.

Development consultants and project managers for the Union is Savills of London and the architects are Carl Fisher and Partners.

On the site of the old railway station at Hawick in the Borders, Laing is to build a

swimming pool complex.

The part single, part two-storey first phase leisure centre development, which is for Roxburgh District Council will have, apart from the swimming pool, squash courts and other amenities. Work has just started and is scheduled for completion by August 1982.

The overall contract cost is £2.3m and the architects are Faulkner-Brown Hendy Watkinson Stenor.

Rush and Tompkins wins £3.8m

THE LARGEST project among several awards totalling over £3.8m made to Rush and Tompkins is worth £863,000. This was awarded by the Home Office Prisons Department for work at Dartmoor Prison. It covers the refurbishment of D wing, a granite cell block that has not been in use for some time, and the building of a clothing exchange store.

Among the other contracts are two design and build projects. In Scotland, the company is to erect a warehouse, offices and a maintenance unit for Rowntree Macintosh at Grover Street, Perth, at a cost of £852,000. The other design and build job is for the London Borough of Southwark. A £575,000 contract calls for the demolition of a building and the erection of a portal-framed

garage for social services vehicles together with two-storey administration offices and a store. All elevations will be brick faced.

At Twyford, Berkshire, the company is to build 12 industrial units for Tavistock Square Properties (a company jointly owned by Rush and Tompkins and Russell Management) under a £740,000 contract. Also for Tavistock Square Properties is a warehouse development at Evelyn Street, Deptford, London SE8. Two units totalling 1,600 sq metres will be built on piled foundations on the site of a filled-in canal. The steel-framed brick clad buildings will have small integral offices. This is valued at £365,000.

Work is just starting on a £457,000 contract for Debenhams at Finchley in North

London, where the company is reinstating a seven-storey office block that has been damaged by fire. The 26-week contract involves minor structural work and refurbishment of the offices. Also in progress is phase one of a kitchen block at Redonwell Infants School. The £200,000 contract was let by the London Borough of Bexley.

Preparing the way

FIRST STAGE of industrial development in the Southfields industrial area for Basildon Development Corporation calls on E. C. Harris and Partners to provide full quantity surveying and cost control services.

Cost planning and viability exercises are now completed, and bills of quantities have been prepared on this phase which consists of 49 mixed single and two-storey units ranging from 100 to 620 square metres.

Described as a new look development, it is based on a "superblock" which is a continuous built form around a number of central service areas, so that a front, or entrance side is presented to the public eye.

Construction is due to start before the end of this year.



Impression of the King William Street House development in the City of London

£17½m City office block

ANOTHER big office block is to appear in the City of London. It will be in King William Street, E.C.4 and the £17½m contract has been awarded to John Mowlem by the City of London Real Property Company, part of the Land Securities Group.

The building, to be known as King William Street House, will have a gross floor area, including plant, car parking, and service areas of about 225,000 sq ft and will incorporate

the shell of a public house. Designed by London architects, the GMW Partnership, the building will be basically cruciform in plan, changing to octagonal at the ground to third floor levels. The podium floors will extend over the whole site and comprise basement and lower ground levels.

The superstructure will consist of ground and ten upper floors, plus a roof plant room. There will be an external perimeter walkway at ground level, extending over the roof

of the podium at the south-west corner.

Built on piled foundations, construction will be of reinforced concrete frame and floors, with diaphragm basement walls. The elevations generally will be granite clad, with an insulation membrane behind.

Structural engineers for the project are Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Partners, and the quantity surveyors are Gardiner and Theobald. Completion is due late in 1983.

Awards to Miller Buckley

TWO contracts, totalling £895,000, have been won by Miller Buckley Civil Engineering.

The largest is for the Greater Manchester Council which has awarded a £620,000 contract covering preparation of a further area at Deansbut Clough refuse disposal site to be used

by laying large diameter glass reinforced plastic pipes to culvert two stream courses. Improved access to the site will be achieved by building a two-lane tarmac carriageway.

For the National Coal Board, South Wales Area, a £275,000 contract covers work on Waunfynydd Nn, 2 tip 566, near

Ebbw Vale. Reprofiling of a spoil heap will be undertaken with 820 linear metres of drainage channels and 550 metres of unlined channels. Other works on site include relief of artesian water pressures, a thrust bore under a railway track and, finally, the landscaping of the whole site.

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Getting down to it

THE UK and Jordan are collaborating to undertake projects in building research which should lead to new knowledge of foundation engineering.

The Building Research Establishment in the UK and the Jordanian Building Materials Research Centre at Amman have agreed to work together on the properties of Jordanian clays.

Research will concentrate on two areas of Jordan; Amman, the capital, and Irbid, which is a smaller but developing town in the north.

The problem the joint team is going to tackle concerns the red (Mediterranean) clays and bed-rock marls which cover much of the ground in these towns.

Traditionally, Jordanian builders have excavated these clays to build their foundations on the solid rock beneath.

Now, as the cities expand, building is taking place in areas where the bedrock is simply too deep for excavation. The result is foundation problems. Several buildings have already been damaged as a result of the shrinking and swelling of the clay with changes in moisture content.

The problem is not restricted to Jordan but to many developing countries; foundations have been developed to overcome the problems of expansion, but to know what method to use best, the physical properties of the soil must be analysed.

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Brotherhood's order book is up 20%, efficiency is greatly improved, re-equipping is under way and new craft apprentices have been recruited. Share prices are almost twice last year's low.

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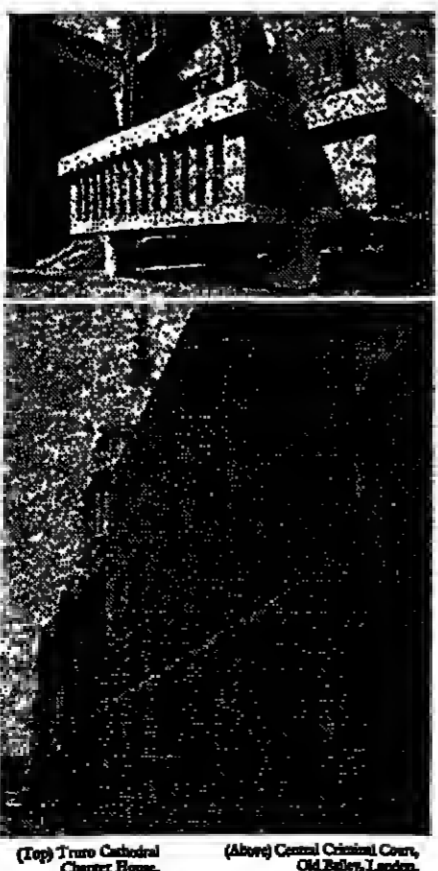
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Restoration of valuable and historic properties is a Wallis hallmark; the Palaces of Westminster and Hampton Court, and Windsor Castle, are amongst those where works have been completed.

New building projects, as well as those pictured above, include a wide variety throughout the South — such as hospitals, schools, purpose built homes, factories, offices and shopping centres.

Teamwork within Wallis is a key contributor to the success of the Group as a whole. Firstly, an impressive labour relations record



(Top) Truro Cathedral Chapter House. (Above) Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, London.

has created a solid base for expansion in the eighties. Secondly, specialist divisions within the Group provide the all important expertise and back-up it needs in times of ever changing priorities and conditions.

All in all, Wallis have some pretty solid foundations on which to build for the future.

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THE MANAGEMENT PAGE

EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER LORENZ

From sugar coating to bitter pill

George Bassett is suffering from a double headache: its basic business and its diversification drive. Arnold Kransdorff reports

IT IS a measure of these uncertain times that a company can plummet from record profit to record loss in the space of two years, while undergoing successive changes designed to avert the slide.

The company is George Bassett Holdings, the Sheffield-based maker of liquorice allsorts. Against the background of the most difficult trading conditions since the early 1930s the group incurred a pre-tax deficit of £1.3m in the year to March 31, 1980—the worst performance in its 140 years' history.

Only two years ago Bassett's fortunes were at a peak—1977/8 profits were a record £2.8m. But they slipped to £1.33m in 1978/9 when home demand started easing off and export margins began to feel the pinch from a strengthening pound.

Bassett's directors were quick to anticipate the need for fundamental changes but in spite of continuous reorganisation, including several unexplained departures and job switching at board level, the company has found it necessary to retrench in recent months.

The recent losses are a particular embarrassment as the directors have, until recently, been making spirited noises about an imminent recovery.

While the company's losses would undoubtedly have been much larger had changes not been made, the group's unhappy position at the moment is a sharp reminder that rationalisation, and diversification in particular—a key factor in Bassett's management strategy—is no guarantee of short-term recovery.

The recovery programme has been in the hands of Bill Mills, who has been with the company for 10 years. Formerly the group's managing director, he took over the chairmanship from Gordon Johnson—the last of the original Bassett family—in November, 1978, just as the recession was beginning to bite.

Mills was originally brought in to implement a unified system of production, marketing and distribution in the then fragmented group. Previously European vice-president of Stanley, the U.S. tool manufacturer, Mills also had 20 years' experience in the tobacco industry, mainly with BAT.

Rationalisation at Bassett was considered essential because of three major factors. All were outside the company's control, but they were also common to all UK confectionery companies, including the giants such as Rowntree Macintosh and Cadbury Schweppes, which have also been showing signs of stress.

In the first place demand for sugar confectionery was dropping sharply in line with lower consumer spending, and last year's VAT increase accelerated the trend. At the same time interest rates were shooting up. So was the value of the pound, with an inevitable effect on exports; though only about a tenth of group sales, exports are Bassett's main problem area.

Other contributory factors were rising raw material costs, particularly sugar, Bassett's main ingredient, and other overheads.

The gravity of Bassett's trading position is illustrated by the national statistics on sugar confectionery consumption—down by 10 per cent since early 1978, with exports 13 per cent lower.

Since that time Minimum Lending Rate, on which commercial rates of interest are based, has jumped from 6.5 per cent to 16 per cent while the value of the pound is almost 40 per cent higher against a basket of Western European currencies.

Wage costs have also mushroomed—up 40 per cent over the period, though because of redundancies and natural wastage, the wage bill has risen by only about a fifth.

Strategy to fight

On taking office almost two years ago Mills announced an ambitious strategy to fight the recession. The plan was to stem export losses, which slipped around £0.5m off group profits in 1978/79, capitalise on the diversification out of confectionery, improve sales penetration in the home market, and generally cut overheads.

As far as exports were concerned, Bassett found itself having to fulfil unexpired contracts at uneconomic prices. It also found that it was losing market share, not only because of the unfavourable currency movements but because of competition from other liquorice confectioners.

At first, in order to maintain long-standing associations, it decided to hold prices rather than lose a trading presence.

But this policy proved largely ineffective as Bassett continued to lose market share, and margins got progressively worse as volume fell.

Mills then decided to change tack and concentrate on margins. Hoping that sterling would drop, or at least stabilise, he instructed that all invoicing be done in sterling—a move which has worked against the company as the pound subsequently strengthened.

He also raised prices in nearly all overseas countries and re-negotiated a number of long-term contracts. At the time Mills admitted that this would mean a downturn in volume but he was confident that it would be more than offset by the improvement in margins.

In the event sales volume did contract but so did margins, largely because of the continuing strength of sterling.

To improve overseas confectionery marketing, Bassett had also acquired its agents in New York and San Francisco and injected new management into the subsidiaries. The move subsequently proved to be uneconomic and Mills has decided to dispose of the companies and revert to an agency method of distribution.

Equally abortive has been Bassett's diversification into specialist foods and leisure—a policy which has been halted during the current crisis.

To reflect the changing profits base, in one of his first moves as chairman, Mills created a new corporate structure. Previously the group's activities were split broadly between manufacture and distribution, with "other activities" lumped into the latter division. Now, the group is divisionalised into sugar confectionery, special foods, leisure and distribution.

The recent diversification was facilitated by the disposal early in 1978 of Drakes Sweets Marketing, a tobacco and confectionery retail and wholesale business. Bassett decided, probably wisely, to sell because of the change in tobacco taxation at the time, which would have meant funding a big increase in working capital when competition was getting progressively stiffer.

The proceeds of the sale—£5.3m—were used largely to increase the group's interests in toys and biscuits. Bassett



Bill Mills, Bassett's chairman: hoping to re-sort the allsorts to improve profitability.

already owned W. Purdy, a small manufacturer of tinned and fresh cakes and A. A. Hales, an importer of toys and model kits; together they cost almost £1m.

Almost immediately Bassett then bought a controlling interest in S. A. Rouger et Cie, a Normandy-based manufacturer of gâteaux, a French water biscuit. It followed this up with Paterson's Shortbread, a Scottish biscuit manufacturer.

In toys Bassett acquired the loss-making Remus Playkits and a little later, a controlling interest in Adams Imports, a distributor of electronic TV games.

Including Purdy and Hales, the combined costs of all the

takeovers totalled around £2.8m. At the time of the acquisition they would collectively have contributed about £1m to annual group profits, but in the year 1979-80 they pitched in only £0.36m.

In the special foods division, which incurred a trading deficit of £0.15m—a £0.3m turnaround from profits—Paterson's, the largest acquisition (costing £0.97m), slumped into the red because of a sharp downturn in UK biscuit demand, while Rouger was hit by a compulsory price freeze in France.

Both Adam and Hales also took a hard knock from the national slump in toy sales. The leisure division's profits halved to £0.5m; Remus, which had

cost £0.4m in 1978, continued to make a loss but rather than persevere, Mills sold out for £0.1m—a settlement which included the company's £0.8m overdraft.

On top of export and diversification disappointments Mills has two other major management problems to contend with.

At de Faam, the Dutch subsidiary making mainly gum-based sweets, production has been almost halted by continuous malfunctions in new plant, and losses have been at a "serious" level.

Secondly, G.D.S. Transport, the distribution subsidiary, has been suffering badly from the dearth of sugar confectionery business in the UK to which it was almost totally geared.

Bassett's experience in the confectionery market at home has been equally problematic, although here there has been some measure of success as a result of changes in marketing strategy.

Faced with the prospect of declining demand Mills first shaved prices but immediately ran into margin difficulties. He then gambled by revising prices upwards—a policy that has apparently paid off as market share has not suffered. In fact Mills claims that the company has managed to increase its share slightly.

Much of this success is probably due to the changes made to the marketing operation. Until recently the company's branded products—Bassett, Wilkinson and Barratt—were handled by separate sales teams which often competed with each other; in addition many central services were triplicated.

Mills decided to regroup by integrating them and creating a network of smaller sales areas. The new sales team, it was found, was able to offer more of the company's products to more confectionery outlets. More recently he has created a special sales force to service grocery outlets, which are selling more confectionery nowadays.

But the recession has also meant retrenchment of both activities and staff. In July this year the group's Glasgow factory had to be closed with the loss of 185 jobs; short-time working has also been introduced at the other sweet factories at Pontefract and Sheffield, reducing overall UK

confectionery capacity by around 25 per cent. Over the past two years Bassett's total workforce has been cut by about 16 per cent.

All of its problems, meanwhile, have been exacerbated by the strain on the balance sheet of high interest rates. Bassett has historically been a low geared company but rising stock levels and the erratic cash flow has pushed up the overdraft.

To help ease the situation Mills has entered into a sale and leaseback agreement on one of its larger buildings with an institutional investor. This has reduced borrowings by £1.5m but interest charges have still roughly quadrupled to £1.2m since 1978; this has doubled the ratio of net borrowings to shareholders' funds to about 37 per cent over the period.

In cash terms interest charges are the largest drain on resources, followed by export losses, G.D.S. Transport, de Faam and the non-toy acquisitions.

Euphoric optimism

So what are Bassett's prospects? With the share price at basement level there is always the possibility that the regular bid rumours will materialise. At the company's headquarters in Sheffield the euphoric optimism being expressed a year ago has been replaced by a nervous, sober realism that recovery is a good deal further away than at first thought.

At the trading level the outlook for sugar confectionery sales is not encouraging. At home volume for the first six months of 1980 showed an 8 per cent downturn, while exports during the same period slumped by nearly a fifth; elsewhere, the prospects for biscuits are unexciting while toy sales have never been worse.

This leaves Bassett in a position where it can only continue to tighten its belt. But as one of the directors commented: "It's like being on a diet. It is relatively easy to lose the first stone, but thereafter it becomes progressively more difficult."

Mills, who plans to retire next year at the age of 60, admits the

immediate future is bleak, but he asserts that every possible effort is being made to get the company back to an acceptable level of profitability.

To bring down the interest charge he plans to improve stock control and step up debt collecting efforts. "Everyone is being geared to the conservation of cash—we are developing machinery to take over from people, improving maintenance systems and watching our travelling expenses. For example, our salesmen are being encouraged to make telephone calls in the lobby rather than in hotel bedrooms because of the 100 per cent surcharge. They are also instructed to fill up with petrol off the motorways, which is cheaper."

To stem export losses, Mills intends to eliminate all small customers and reduce volume in countries "where we don't have a cat in hell's chance of making a profit."

In addition he plans to change product packs to "enable us to improve margins without overpricing our goods"—this will probably involve using cheaper packaging materials, in some cases cheaper raw materials and adjusting the "mix" of the liquorice allsorts selection.

At de Faam, where a new managing director has been appointed, Mills says he has personally inspected the plant and he is confident that it is "now working very satisfactorily." The company is currently making profits, he adds. Paterson's is "repeating its momentum" while Rouger "is much improved."

Referring to GDS, where another new managing director has been appointed, Mills says that three new contracts have been negotiated—"enough to get back into profit."

Turning to the long term he intends to redesign products "to suit the changing tastes of the consuming public" and make major incursions into developing countries.

"The UK inflation rate is coming down and international differentials are narrowing," he notes with optimism. Interest rates should also follow downwards.

"The remedial action we have taken is putting us in a strong position to take positive advantage of the improved trading situation when the economy picks up," says Mills.

While this is undoubtedly true, much depends on how long the recession lasts. Bassett's trading account will be anorexic but fortunately there is still some fat in the balance sheet.

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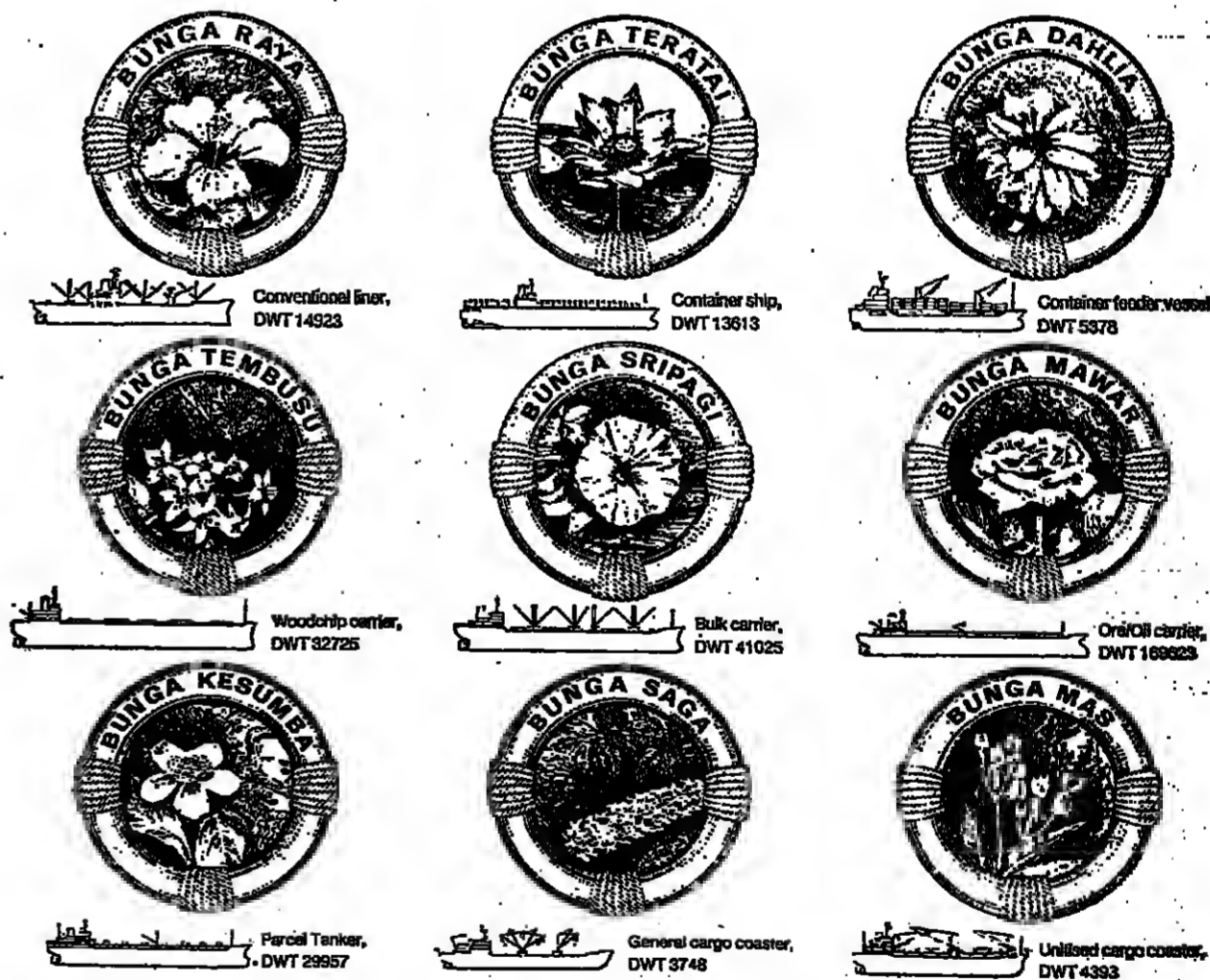
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At £35,100, the Ferrari 512 B.B. is, we
admit, even faster, ritzier and flashier.
But let's face it, in these hard times, you've
got to economise somewhere.

TR7. The exciting car you can afford.



Simple is efficient.



The new Ford Escort.

The car illustrated is an Escort Ghia, with optional metallic paint, headlamp wash, rear wash/wipe, central locking, power front windows, stereo radio and stereo cassette and power aerial.

مكتبة الفضل

Anatomy of an efficient car

The new Ford Escort is a spacious front wheel drive hatchback with a transverse engine and all independent suspension.

It can carry five people in comfort.

With the biggest engine it can do over 44 mpg at 56 mph. And with the smallest engine it achieves over 90 mph*.

Service intervals are 12,000 miles with an interim service at 6,000 miles. It's designed to be one of the cheapest cars to service in its class.

And the body is protected by a 20 stage anti-corrosion programme.

How have we achieved such remarkable efficiency? In engineering, simple is efficient. So we've kept the engineering in the new Escort as simple and straightforward as possible.

Engineers call it looking for the elegant solution. It takes sophisticated technology to find it.

Here then, step by step, is the story of the new Ford Escort. Simply one of the most efficient cars you can buy.

Transverse engine and front wheel drive makes more space for people.

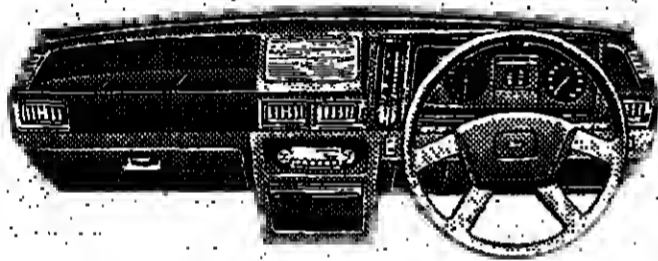
The simplest way to enlarge the passenger space without enlarging the car is to make the engine space smaller.

So, based on a wealth of experience with the Fiesta, we've mounted the engine sideways and given it front wheel drive.

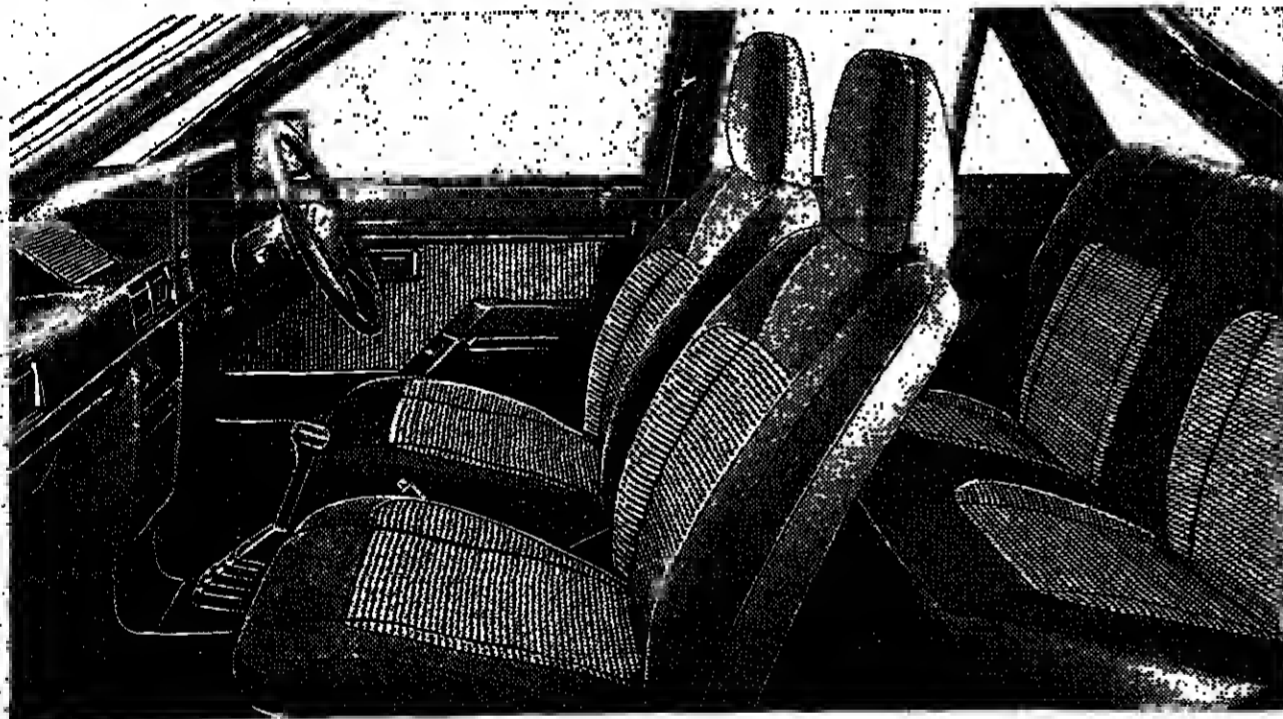
This eliminates the transmission tunnel and the rear axle differential, thus leaving more room for you and your luggage. Incidentally it also saves weight and improves traction.

The Escort's seats have coil springs tuned to the car's suspension and they're deeply contoured to give comfortable support and reduce fatigue.

Among the more luxurious equipment you can order in the new Escort Ghia are electric front windows, stereo radio/tape player with electric aerial, central door locking, tinted glass and headlamp washers.



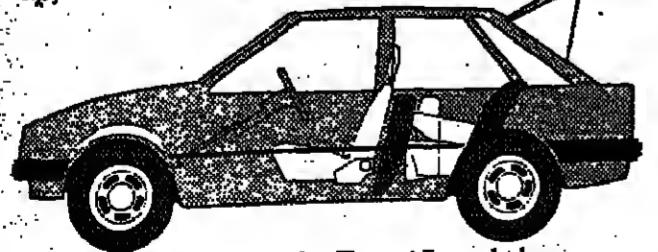
As a safety check Ghia and GL instruments include warning lights for low oil, water, windscreen washers, brake fluid and even front brake pad wear.



Interior of Escort Ghia. Standard features include remote control driver and passenger door mirrors, a digital clock with date and stop watch functions and a screened glass sun roof that either tilts or slides.

The hatchback that thinks it has a boot

The Escort has a new kind of hatchback. At first glance it looks as if there is a conventional boot. But the tailgate actually opens all the way up to the top of the back window, giving access to 20.3 cu. ft. of space with the seat up, 48.7 cu. ft. when it is folded.



For security, on the Escort L and above there is a removable shelf which hides your valuables.

Up to 47 mpg. Up to 104 mph from ultra efficient new engines*

Drawing on the experience of ten years with the previous Escort, Ford have designed entirely new 1.3 and 1.6 litre engines with aluminium cylinder heads.

1 Ultra efficient new transversely mounted engines give remarkable performance and economy.

2 Latest technology applied to anti corrosion treatment.

3 Front wheel drive for good traction, road holding and directional stability.

4 Rack and pinion steering - accurate, precise and responsive.

5 Large glass area with laminated windscreen and slip window pillars gives panoramic visibility. Tinted glass optional.

6 Optional screened glass sun roof (standard on Ghia) tilts or slides and also features an interior sunblind.

7 A new kind of hatchback. Part hatchback, part boot.

8 Integral tailgate spoiler reduces drag.

9 Tailgate wiper (optional).

10 Heated rear window, on L and above.

11 Optional electric front windows on Ghia.

12 Folding rear seat gives flexible luggage space.

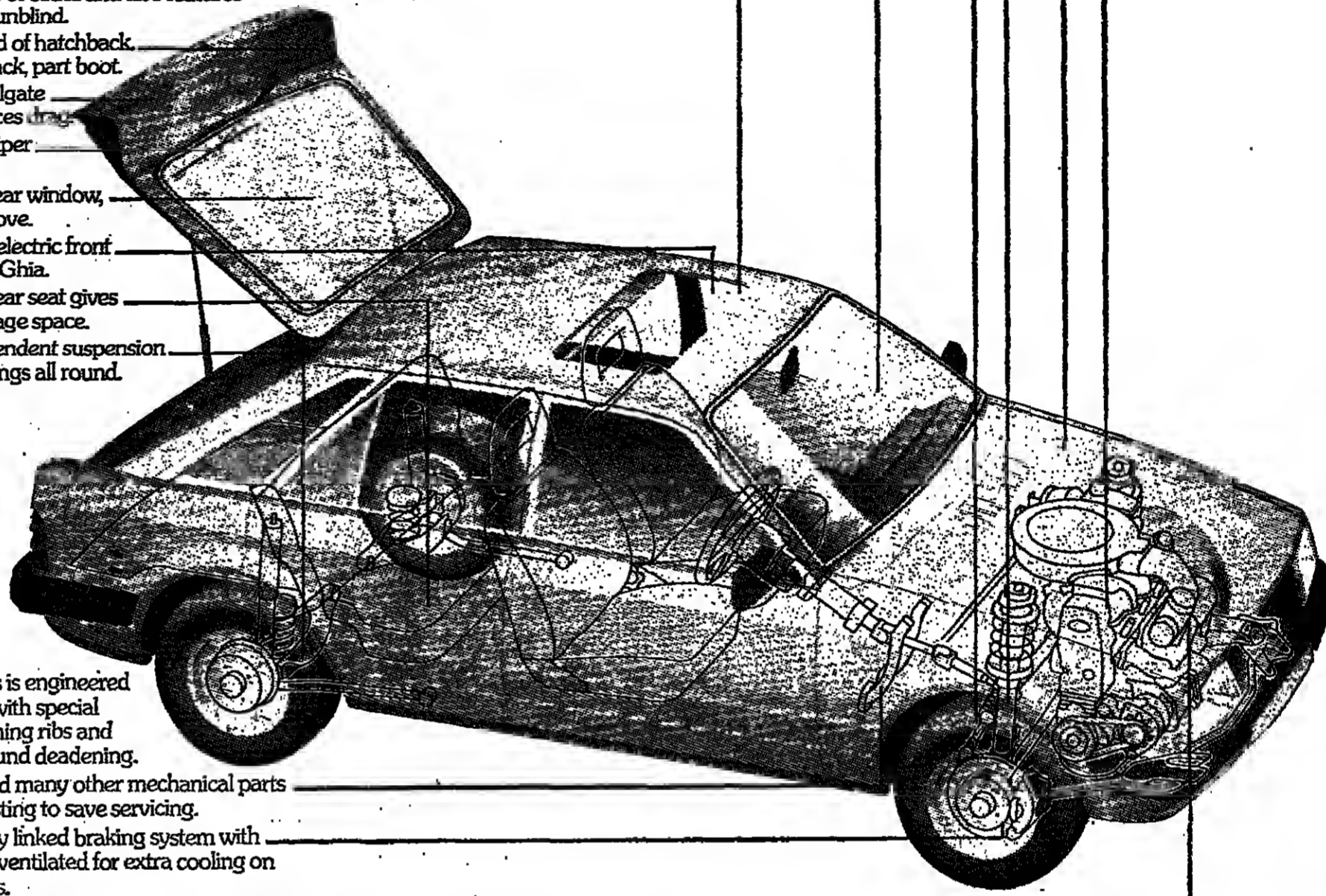
13 All independent suspension with coil springs all round.

14 Quietness is engineered into the car with special engine stiffening ribs and extensive sound deadening.

15 Clutch and many other mechanical parts are self-adjusting to save servicing.

16 Diagonally linked braking system with front discs - ventilated for extra cooling on faster models.

17 Gearbox is separate from engine for easy maintenance.



12,000 miles between major services

The new Escort has so many self-adjusting and maintenance free features that it almost services itself. These features mean that it can go 12,000 miles between major services with only an interim service at 6,000 miles.

In fact, based on studies comparing routine servicing costs with competitive cars, Ford estimate that the new Escort will be cheaper to service than most of its rivals.

Here's why: 1 Self-adjusting clutch. 2 Self-adjusting brakes. 3 Self-adjusting tappets and breakerless ignition (on 1.3 and 1.6 engines). 4 Maintenance free wheel bearings. 5 Lubricated-for-life suspension, steering and door hinges. 6 Brake wear checking without removing wheels. 7 Centrally located fuses and relays. 8 Exterior bulbs replaced without tools. 9 See-through brake and clutch fluid containers. 10 Extended interval battery topping-up.

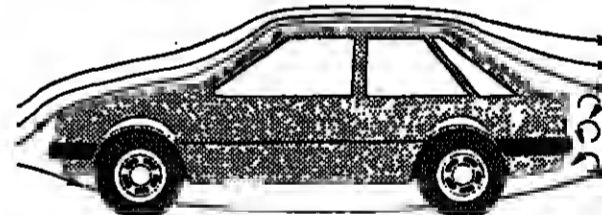
Latest technology applied to rust prevention

This is how we help keep rust at bay: After zinc phosphate anti-corrosion treatment, the body is given two coats of primer, then three coats of tough enamel paint are baked on. Window surrounds are made of aluminium which cannot rust. And the bonnet is made of zinc plated steel. Rust traps are designed out of the body. Box sections and door bottoms are protected by wax injection. Lower body panels are painted with a chip protection primer. And wheel arches and vulnerable underbody areas are treated with chip resistant PVC coating. The remaining underbody area gets a tough wax anti-corrosion sealant to protect against salt.

Styling used to be an art. Today at Ford it's a science

We call it "air flow management," the science of controlling the flow of air over, around and under the car. Thanks to efficient "air flow management" the new Escort emerged

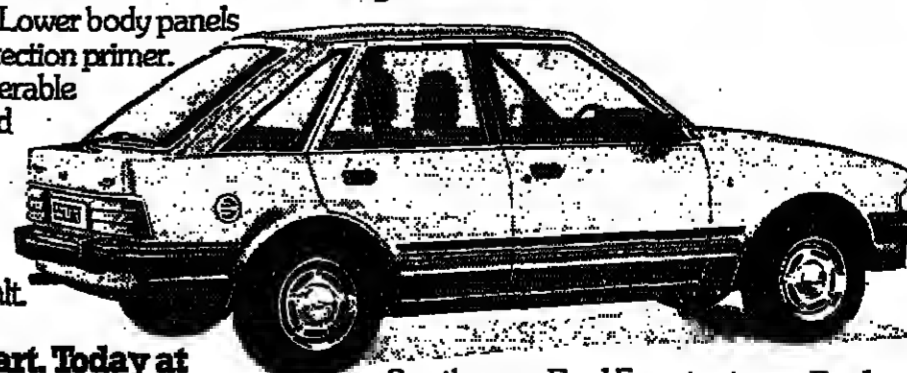
from the wind tunnel with a drag coefficient of only 0.385, the most efficient in its class. At 70 mph as much as 70% of a car's energy can be wasted simply overcoming wind resistance, so streamlined design contributes significantly towards reducing fuel consumption.



1 Integral tailgate spoiler reduces drag, and the whole rear end design creates an actively managed area of turbulence, that keeps spray and dirt off the back window whilst driving. 2 Front spoiler improves directional stability. 3 Aerodynamic radiator grille channels air over bonnet at high speed.

All independent suspension takes the rough smoothly

The new Escort's suspension is all independent, with coil springs all round. It not only gives a smoother, more comfortable ride, but also makes for sure, more predictable road-holding and handling. And there's a diagonally linked braking system with front discs, so that even if one circuit fails you can still stop on the straight and narrow.



See the new Ford Escorts at your Ford dealers now. And test drive an efficient car.

Range and Prices Escort 1.1 litre from £3374, Escort L 1.1 litre from £3695, Escort GL 1.3 litre from £4221, Escort Ghia from £4726. Maximum prices as at 26th Sept. 1980. Seat belts, car tax and VAT included. Delivery and number plates at extra cost.

*Performance and economy

Government fuel consumption test figures Constant 56 mph (90 km/h) (mpg) (litres/100km)			Top speed (mph)
1.1 HC	49.6	5.7	90.1
1.3 HC	47.1	6.0	97.6
1.6 HC (EV)	44.1	6.4	103.8
Simulated urban cycle			Ford computer figures
1.1 HC	34.9 mpg (8.1 litres/100 km)	36.2 mpg (7.8 litres/100 km)	
1.3 HC	30.4 mpg (9.3 litres/100 km)	36.7 mpg (7.7 litres/100 km)	
1.6 HC	30.7 mpg (9.2 litres/100 km)	34.4 mpg (8.2 litres/100 km)	

FORD ESCORT



BRITAIN'S STING RAY

Smart torpedo battles to survive

DEADLY BATTLE was waged between a nuclear submarine and a nimble torpedo near Weymouth recently. The hunter-killer twisted, turned, deep-dived, and suffused the sea with spurious electronic signals to distract its lethal pursuer.

Tactically, for mile after mile, the torpedo clung to its quarry, matching its speed and every evasive manoeuvre unperturbed by the decoys and the electronic smoke-screen. Gradually the torpedo narrowed the gap until it was close enough to home on the most vulnerable part of the submarine and be absolutely sure of a kill when its warhead burst open the pressure hull.

Packed into less than 8 ft of electric-powered torpedo was enough firepower to outwit a crew of 100 submariners striving desperately for their survival, aided by the most advanced weapons and defences the Navy can conceive today. Here was an "intelligent torpedo," a far cry from Robert Whitehead's original concept of the self-propelled submarine torpedo of 1868, with its range of 600 ft and speed of 6.5 knots.

If defence scientists have their way it will be the world's first truly intelligent torpedo to go into service, capable of recognising enemy warships by the noises they make, and of pursuing them to a kill—or until the torpedo runs out of fuel.

The torpedo is called Sting Ray, the brainchild of scientists with the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment at Portland near Weymouth. This particular "battle" was being fought on the screen of a computer.

But Sting Ray is already fighting another bitter battle, for its own survival. This battle is between the Defence Ministry, which dearly wants the weapon, and Parliament, which has been made aware

for the first time this year of two £1bn defence projects launched in the 1970s—the other is Chevaline, the new nuclear weapon—of which there has been no significant public discussion.

To quote Sir Clifford Cornford, the scientist who until his retirement earlier this year was chief of the procurement executive at the Defence Ministry: Sting Ray is "vastly cleverer" than its only rival at present, an updated version of a torpedo Britain has been buying from the U.S. since the 1960s. For one thing, the U.S. torpedo cannot spot an enemy lurking stationary in a submarine lair, as Sting Ray can. The same weapon has been designed to satisfy both the Navy and the Air Force.

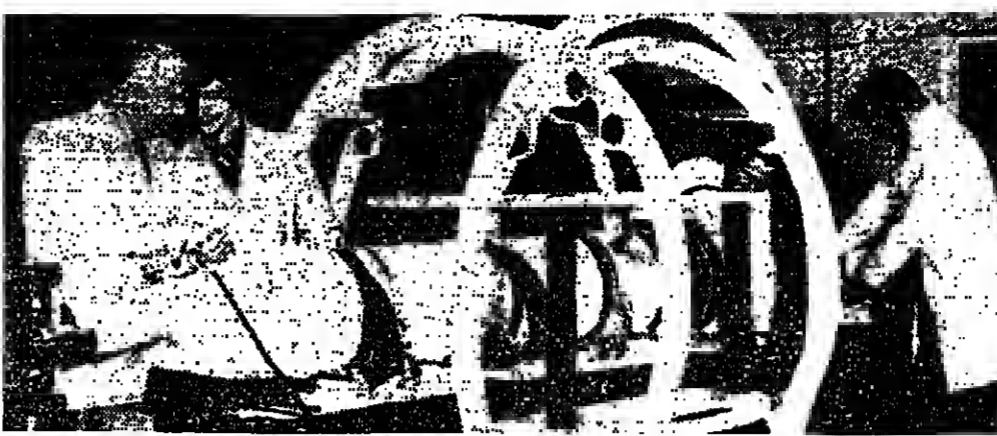
The U.S. Navy has recently begun to develop its own version. British scientists are sure that Sting Ray is several years ahead of any similar new U.S. weapon.

Next month the Defence Ministry must justify more fully to Parliament its case for having such a highly intelligent torpedo. The Prime Minister has spoken recently of the need to devise simpler, cheaper, more readily exportable weapons. Of Sting Ray a Cabinet Office sceptic comments scathingly: "It virtually walks across the water on its tail when you blow a whistle."

In its report in July the Public Accounts Committee disclosed that a project which, when originally conceived in 1968, had been estimated as costing £74m has risen by 1979 to £923m (£158m discounted back to 1969 price level).

"We feel bound to say on the evidence available to us, we were not convinced by MoD's case for speeding an additional £720m rather than purchasing the U.S. torpedo," reported the committee coldly. It had been told that Britain could update its present U.S. Mark 46 anti-

DAVID FISHLOCK reports on the fight between the Defence Ministry, which wants to continue development of its new, intelligent torpedo, and Parliament, which is not convinced the weapon is worth the cost—estimated last year at £923m.



The Sting Ray: Its features include high performance in very shallow and very deep water, and very high reliability.

submarine torpedo transforming it into a more advanced weapon called NEARTIP—near-term improvement programme—in only 18 months for a mere £200m.

The MoD points out that, at 1968 price levels, the figure of £923m is one and a half times higher than its scientists' first "guesstimate." The Ministry claims that Britain will need a particularly sophisticated weapon if it expects the Navy and Air Force to protect its shores and keep its sea lanes open against the kind of submarine threat it foresees later this decade and in the 1990s. It plans to equip its 60 frigates and some 400 aircraft—Nimrods and anti-submarine helicopters—with Sting Ray.

If, instead, it were to buy the NEARTIP, the £200m U.S. option, it would also be obliged to wait a few years to buy the U.S. version of Sting Ray, the advanced lightweight torpedo (ALWT), to keep its anti-submarine defences abreast of the growing threat. No one can say at this early stage of co-operation what ALWT might cost.

At Portland they are exasperated with the Public Accounts Committee's failure, as

they see it, to grasp either the magnitude of the threat, the speed with which it is increasing, or the difficulties of developing a weapon to combat the threat perceived 15-20 years ahead.

"It's an underestimate not an overstatement," says one senior scientist, of the escalation in development costs. The scientists themselves claim that they were obliged by the MoD's own system to make a guess at the cost at a stage when they themselves scarcely understood the problem.

Sting Ray is one of the first of a new breed of "smart weapons"—a warhead with an astonishing amount of intelligence—marking as big an advance in the complexity of warfare as the change from piston to jet-engined warplanes, which put anti-aircraft guns out of business.

Not until 1977 had the scientists sorted out clearly the kind of weapon the Navy and Air Force were seeking for their anti-submarine defences. Not least of the difficulties is that Britain sits in what one senior naval officer describes as "probably the most difficult waters in the world" which

could have been designed specially to give aid and comfort to menacing submarines. The weapon they wanted was one which would increase the number of launch platforms for anti-submarine torpedoes from a handful of submarines armed with heavyweight torpedoes to hundreds of ships and aircraft armed with a lightweight but exceptionally smart weapon, armed with high explosive, able to find an enemy on its own and blast a hole in its immensely strong pressure hull.

By 1977 the ministry reached the end of the "project definition" phase of the Sting Ray project. Its engineers and scientists at Portland were embarking upon the project itself with a precise definition of the weapon: with figures for every facet of the performance they believed could be achieved.

The MoD began to negotiate a commercial contract with a GEC subsidiary, Marconi Space and Defence Systems (MSDS), which the ministry had been treating as its prime contractor for torpedoes since the mid-1970s. Previously it had relied upon the Royal Ordnance

First, it negotiated a £200m contract, announced last November, for the design, development and initial production of the weapon. The unusual feature of this defence contract is that it carries an incentive bonus.

The ministry was well aware of the costly hiccup that so often occurs when a major project moves from development into production, and many of those who had nursed it move on to other projects. This time it ordered at the outset enough of the product for trials, to ensure that its contractor would take great pains to prevent any hiccup between development and manufacture. In fact, MSDS's profits under the "target cost incentive scheme" depend crucially upon a smooth transfer from development to manufacture.

Ministry officials claim that the contract defines a "fair balance of risk between MoD and the company." They reckon a GEC company would not have entered into such a novel and demanding defence contract unless it believed it could still make a profit. They are plainly hankering upon the legendary tight financial control exercised

by GEC, together with their own unusually precise definition of the project, to ensure that it keeps to the cost and schedule quoted. So far, they say, it is working well.

By the end of last year Portland had completed—its considerable satisfaction—trials on the propulsion and control systems of the weapon. Sting Ray is a small torpedo, only 2.1 metres in length and 330mm in diameter.

Early this year Portland began trials of the high-risk facets of Sting Ray's technology, namely its brainpower, and electronic sensors. They began to try out its ability to search for and find targets on its own initiative, satisfy itself that they were indeed the enemy, home on the target and kill it.

Its "brain" is a powerful microminiature computer "no bigger than two milk cartons," developed by GEC. Its "ears"—most kinds of rays such as light or radar are of limited use in the sea—are a microprocessor-controlled array of sonar sensors, sensitive enough to locate muzzy echoes from an enemy doing his best to hide his presence.

Electronically speaking, it is what defence scientists call a robust weapon, highly resistant to natural or deliberate attempts to confuse it. Its computer has been programmed with the characteristic sonar signatures of enemy submarines, acquired by Portland scientists who painstakingly catalogue the groans, clatter and buzzing picked up by sonars from different parts of every vessel.

These latest trials of its intelligence and data processing capability are also proving "quite successful," says the ministry. Recently Sting Ray (unarmed) has been seeking and finding real targets—submarines—and, says one sailor, with feeling, "it makes a nasty bang when it hits."

Sting Ray is scheduled to go

into service in the near future, initially with the Nimrods, on anti-submarine patrol. On the evidence of trials over the past year the MoD believes that not only have its scientists and engineers solved a particularly difficult weapon problem but, since the project was clearly defined in 1977, its managers officially say they have kept it on schedule and within budget.

They say they have every confidence the company will make a profit, on a weapon that satisfies the requirements of two arms of the forces. They expect to award MSDS a further contract worth upwards of £600m to mass-produce the torpedo, with production peaking in about 1988.

Will Britain succeed in selling Sting Ray to its NATO partners? This is a question the Public Accounts Committee pursued energetically, having ascertained from the MoD that neither the U.S. nor any European nation involved in patrolling the Eastern Atlantic had shown any readiness to share in a joint venture the £140m spent on research and development by early this year.

MoD officials admitted to the committee they had been disappointed that so advanced a concept in weapons, acceptable to both the Navy and the Air Force, had not drawn any NATO partners into a joint venture. The U.S. is going its own way with the ALWT; other European partners have put a lower priority on Eastern Atlantic defences against enemy submarines.

But that did not preclude sales to NATO once Sting Ray could be shown to work, said Sir Clifford Cornford. "If we can see Sting Ray running well and demonstrate it, then I think its prospects will have changed radically," he told the committee in February. This summer's trials have brought Sting Ray close to the start of an export drive.

Letters to the Editor

Isolation as policy

From Mr. P. Easton.

Sir—So the little Englishers, the anti-anti-foreigners head-in-the-sand elements of the Labour Party have achieved their hollow aim of voting for withdrawal from the European Community.

No doubt this will be linked, if and when Labour is returned to power, with import controls and other restrictions on free trade; in short, a withdrawal into fortress Britain, which will thus sink even further into obscurity, irrelevance and poverty.

In years to come, this historic if negative vote at the Labour Party conference will undoubtedly come to be compared to other black dates in our history, such as the surrender of Singapore or the betrayal at Yalta.

And let everyone be clear that it is the mass media which is largely to blame. For years, they have portrayed the European Community largely in terms of food prices, butter mountains and nationalistic wrangles. Little wonder that the rank and file in Blackpool know little better and voted so disastrously for our future.

Peter Easton, 3 Strangeways Terrace, W14.

Qualifying accounts

From Mr. T. Griffin.

Sir—Lex reports (September 22) on the efforts the accounting standards committee is making to attempt to enforce its standards.

My modest sized firm is the auditor of one of the subsidiaries of a major company. We recently proposed to qualify our audit report on the failure of that company to comply with SSAP 12. That accounting standard, which gives no discretion, requires the representation of freehold properties. The parent company's loss of support of its large firm auditors told us we would lose the audit if we did qualify. We appealed to the Institute's technical service for support, the reply being that it was not its policy to become involved in individual cases.

I am afraid we saw no point in becoming martyrs for an accounting standard which I personally think is wrong anyway.

T. A. Griffin, 22-24 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1.

Academic fantasy

From Mr. I. Tegner.

Sir—There is a law which states that "the chief cause of problems is solutions" and the latest proposals for monitoring accounting standards can only lead to increased regulation with decreased understanding.

In his article on September 22, Michael Lafferty reports new proposals under which the accounting standards committee would include five members nominated by various regulatory bodies such as the Stock Exchange and the Council for the Securities Industry. The remainder would be appointed by the consultative committee of accountancy bodies. There

would also be a review body similarly appointed. It will be regrettable if the opportunity is not taken to increase the involvement of those responsible for preparing and presenting accounts. Rule-making and monitoring may make life easy for the rule makers but it sometimes seems to be forgotten that the objective is to produce accounts which give a true and fair view, not which are merely arithmetically correct.

Representations by those in industry have recently helped to improve the quality of accounting standard setting and this positive trend should now be accelerated by greater involvement of representatives of industry and commerce who are not necessarily nominees of the accountancy bodies.

Only in this way can we hope to achieve the substance of economic realism in accounting development, which presently seems to many of us to be an exercise in the higher flights of academic fantasy.

I. N. Tegner, Boulder House, Knightsbridge, SW1.

Reality must obtrude

From Mr. C. Dillaway.

Sir—As a long-time student of your staff writers on economic matters I am pleased to notice that realism is beginning to enter into their arguments. Perhaps in time our political masters will adopt the same approach.

Our standard of living is what we make and do divided by the number there are of us. Our standard of living only increases as we produce goods and services at a lower cost price. It is received wisdom that lower cost production puts people out of work. The reverse is true. Those employed produce more because it can be sold. Seventy per cent of the cost of production is purchased from others so the benefit spreads and spreads.

When these concepts are expressed in the jargon of economics the message is lost. I almost get the feeling that cowering symptoms expressed in obscure language is more important than making us all better off. We make ourselves better off by producing more affordable goods and services.

Then all the commentators express their arguments in money terms. Money is a medium for conveying information regarding claims on goods and services. All your readers and certainly all your staff know what information is when they see it, but science has no defence. Have no fear, science does not have a but that does not stop us all making use of it. Without knowing what money is we turn Kelvin's statement: "If we cannot measure something we cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind" on its head. Because we can count money we think that we know more than we do. Economists have unfortunately erected their edifice on an unproven assumption, hence the possibility of differing conclusions.

All this amounts to a plea that what matters is the "real economy" if I may permit myself to use the jargon. Put that thought "save cost, make it cheaper" before the British people while explaining the reasons and the necessity for

economic measures would disappear like snow on a warm spring day.

C. Dillaway, Highcroft, Gunhouse Lane, Bowbridge, Stroud, Glos.

Elaborate, gentlemen

From Mr. Teddy Taylor, MP.

Sir—Your leading articles are usually more sensible and balanced than those in other papers and I was therefore sorry to read (October 2) that the Financial Times has joined the "mass movement" of calling for "profound reforms" in the common agricultural policy without giving any indication of the direction in which reform should develop.

I believe that there is increasing evidence that there is no "profound reform" which would resolve the basic problems of the CAP and at the same time be politically acceptable to all the member states of the EEC. Would it not help to advance this important issue and argument if a gentleman's agreement was to be made forbidding any newspapers or any politicians from calling for "fundamental," "profound" or "far-reaching" reforms in the CAP unless at the same time they indicate the principles of the reform they advocate. It would also help to further the argument if the agreement could be extended to require newspapers to indicate what action should be taken if such "profound reforms" proved to be impossible to achieve.

Teddy Taylor, House of Commons, SW1.

The Irish punt

From the Managing Director, ATP International.

Sir—It is perfectly clear that many debtors in Ireland either do not know or do not want to know that the punt is at present valued at something like 14 per cent less than sterling.

Confusion is compounded by the fact that both the punt and the pound are denominated by the same £ sign.

This leads to total confusion. Surely the Irish ought to be persuaded to use a different symbol of their currency.

Norman Gant, ATP International, 44-46 High Street, Edgware, Middlesex.

Milk on the doorstep

From the President, Dairy Trade Federation.

Sir—Following publication (October 2) of the "Which?" report on milk, a great deal of prominence has been given to the table claiming to compare the retail prices of milk in 11 countries. This table shows the UK has the most expensive milk. This is inaccurate and misleading for a number of reasons.

Only the footnotes explain that in at least three of the 11 countries there is a subsidy on milk, namely Sweden, Denmark and Ireland.

The price in all the other countries quoted is the price of a pint of milk on the shop counter whereas in the UK the price is of a pint of milk delivered to the doorstep.

The table ignores the fact that milk in the UK is sold in its natural state, whereas in all

the other countries some of the butter fat has been taken out of it.

It is interesting to see from the survey how satisfied the customers are with the doorstep delivery system, which further confirms the acceptability of the retail price in the UK.

Nicholas Horsley, 19 Gornwall Terrace, NW1.

The money supply

From the Managing Director, Zenith Electric Co.

Sir—Mr. Bourlet (October 2) accuses me of woolly thinking, but I have to respond by charging him with making a woolly interpretation of what I said in my letter. I did not say that firms have to borrow new money to pay the interest on old borrowings (although, of course, they do). My point was concerned with the inflation of current assets which has nothing to do with interest rates, except in so far as the latter affect the cost of the money required to cover the inflation.

Perhaps I should explain to Mr. Bourlet that current assets in a manufacturing company mean stocks and debtors.

I also did not conclude that interest rates must be cut, and I made no reference to prices and incomes policies. In fact I concluded that it is inflation that must be cut, since this is the most important single factor leading to an increasing indebtedness of the manufacturing sector.

I. H. Pogmore, The Zenith Electric Co., Cranfield Road, Wotton, Milton Keynes.

Carey Street queue

From Mr. W. Wood.

Sir—As a member of a small company, I find it rather disturbing to note the practice of some of the larger and more established organisations of withholding payment of their accounts for periods of 60-90 days from date of invoice.

This is becoming more frequent and in many cases is the result of smaller companies going to the wall, especially when settlement from the smaller company is demanded by the larger—or else!

Surely, in these days of financial restrictions it is a case of trying to understand each other's problems, and endeavouring to work together to maintain a fair balance of trading, as I feel sure that a more sympathetic understanding of the problems existing with the small outfit would tend, in some measure, to stem the flow of applicants to join the queue to Carey Street.

W. H. Wood, 11, Carisbrooke House, "Courtlands," Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey.

The best of enemies

From Mr. H. Goodchild.

Sir—The two most unselfish people in politics today must be Mr. Anthony Wedgwood Benn and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher—each determined that the other shall win the next election.

H. W. Goodchild, 5 The Broadway, Crawley, Sussex.

Today's Events

GENERAL
UK: Meeting of National Economic Development Council—discussions include implications of North Sea Oil and Chancellor of the Exchequer's paper dealing with pay rise problems.
Two Canadian Cabinet Ministers, Mr. MacGilligan, External Affairs Minister and Mr. John Roberts, who has a constitutional brief in addition to his portfolio for Science, Technology and the Environment, in London for talks with Mrs. Margaret Thatcher to explain plans to give Canada a constitution of its own.
Prison officers begin industrial action over meal-break payment.

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN, on economic difficulties of the NSPCC.
Annual meeting of the Masters' Association of Great Britain, Café Royal, London, noon.
Society of Engineers meeting discusses paper "Demolition and other engineering problems for a chartered loss adjuster." Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, 6 pm.
Sir Peter Gadsden, Lord Mayor of London, tours BBC Television Centre, Wood Lane, London, W12, 7 pm.

OVERSEAS: Romanian Party Chief and State President Nicolae Ceausescu begins official visit to Canada.

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS
House of Lords resumes sitting after summer recess—business includes: Married Women's Policies of Assurance (Scotland) (Amendment) Bill, committee.
OFFICIAL STATISTICS
Wholesale price index (September provisional). Retail sales (August final). Hire purchase and other instalment credit business (August).
COMPANY MEETINGS
See Week's Financial Diary on Page 25.

A unique chance to get your factory project on the map.

If you're relocating or expanding, British Steel Corporation (Industry) Ltd. will help set up your business in any of these locations. All you need is a viable project that will create new jobs, and an eye for a unique incentive package.

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Special arrangements with the European Coal and Steel Community means you can receive loans way below Bank Rate.

NEW FACTORIES RENT-FREE INITIALLY
Ready-built or custom-made factories, rent-free for up to two years on fully serviced sites.

HEAVILY SUBSIDISED WORKFORCE TRAINING
Grants can cover at least 70% of in-house training costs.

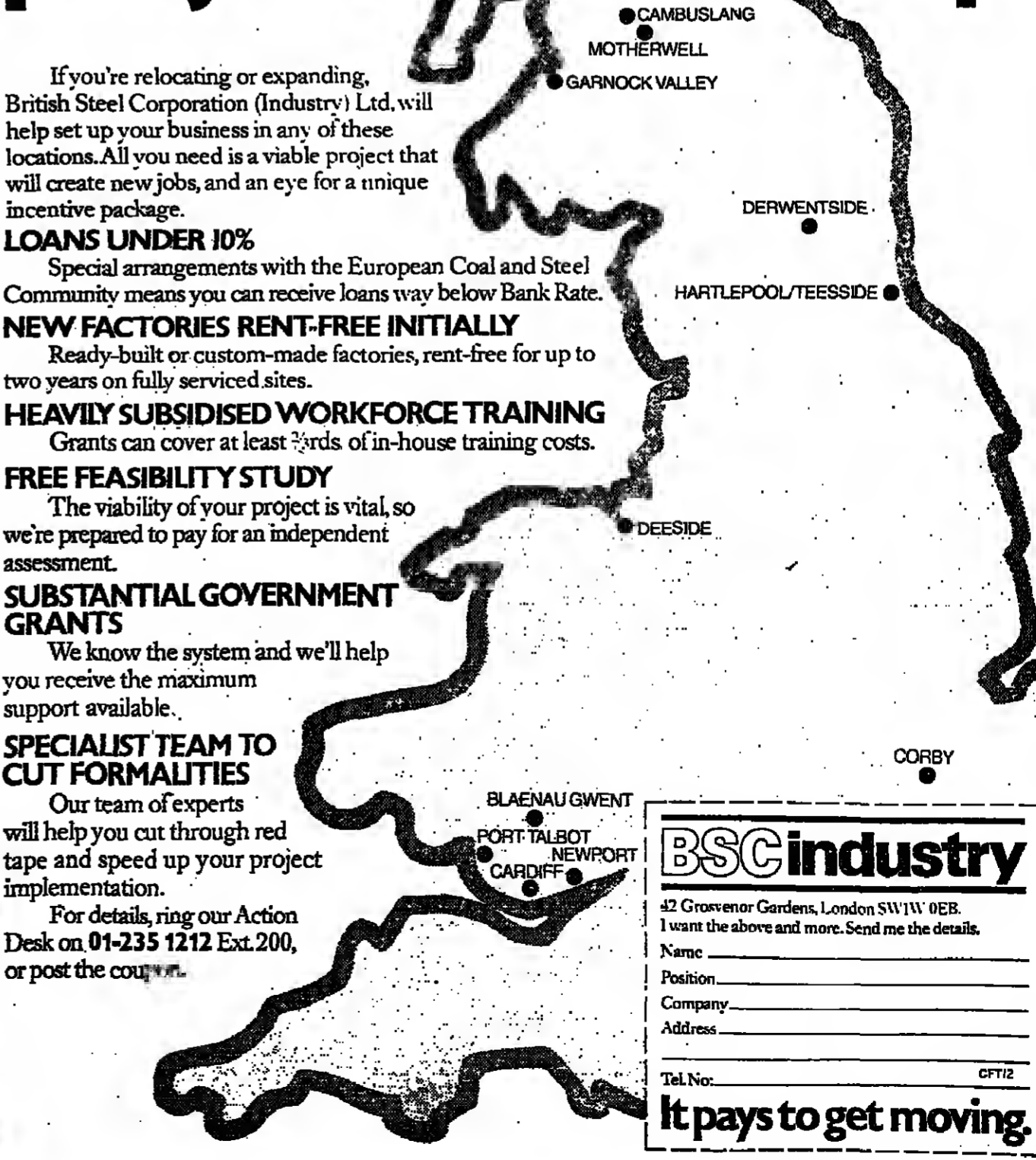
FREE FEASIBILITY STUDY
The viability of your project is vital, so we're prepared to pay for an independent assessment.

SUBSTANTIAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS
We know the system and we'll help you receive the maximum support available.

SPECIALIST TEAM TO CUT FORMALITIES

Our team of experts will help you cut through red tape and speed up your project implementation.

For details, ring our Action Desk on 01-235 1212 Ext. 200, or post the coupon.



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42 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1 0EB.
I want the above and more. Send me the details.

Name _____
Position _____
Company _____
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It pays to get moving.

INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS

INTERNATIONAL BONDS

Investors put a toe in the water

"WHERE THERE is life there is hope," sighed one exhausted bond dealer after the confused scenes witnessed last Monday in the dollar sector of the Eurobond market. Despite the confusion witnessed earlier last week, many Eurobond dealers are optimistic about the run-up to the U.S. election. Undaunted by contrary evidence in the past few weeks, they are convinced that both the U.S. money supply figures and U.S. interest rates will drop again soon.

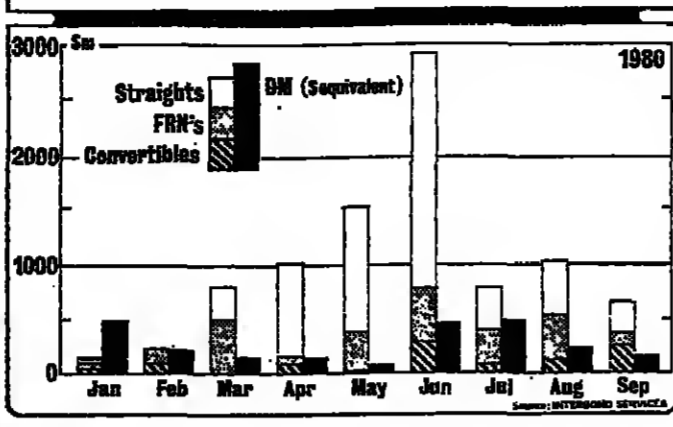
This conviction is, to a degree, shared by investors and it pushed prices of seasoned straight dollar issues up by more than one point last Friday. So far, did some bonds move up that dealers found themselves quoting prices to investors that were well under the level at which they themselves could obtain the paper in the market. The week end, however, started on a sour note. The shock of very bad U.S. money supply figures 10 days ago hit Eurobond prices with a vengeance on Monday, pushing prices down by an average of 1½ points. The unwillingness of dealers, particularly in investment houses, to hold any paper in stock resulted in some very sharp

TOP LEAD MANAGERS IN THE EUROBOND MARKET

Name	Amount \$m.
1 Deutsche Bank	1,864.5
2 CFB	1,454.0
3 S. G. Warburg	907.7
4 Morgan Stanley	869.7
5 Paribas	848.8
6 Goldman Sachs	530.0
7 Dresdner Bank	545.8
8 Citicorp	469.7
9 Salomon Bros.	432.5
10 WestLB	430.1

Note: Includes all public issues of Eurobonds (excluding Foreign bonds) domestic markets in Europe, U.S. and Japan issued between January 1 and September 30, 1980. Full amount credited to lead manager, or divided equally between joint lead managers.

VOLUME OF NEW EUROBOND ISSUES



falls in prices of individual issues despite the fact that the volume of paper being sold was not great. Commercial banks, on the other hand, have been acting as a stabilising force and many observers believe that some recent straight issues, notably the two three-year ones launched the week before last, would have sunk to much

deeper discounts had it not been for the fact that they were put into bank inventories. At the end of the week, the 12½ per cent bond to 1985 for Transamerica Corporation was standing at 84-97½.

On Tuesday and Wednesday the market picked up nearly as quickly as it had lost ground on Monday and, as the "real" investors started buying on

Thursday and Friday, prices shot up strongly. Much depends for this week on how the market reacts to the new money supply data, which was much more favourable than many expected.

Two convertibles and two Floating Rate Notes were launched last week while the \$30m convertible for Lear Petroleum was increased to \$40m and moved to a slight

premium as soon as it started trading on Thursday.

The privately placed Floating Rate Note for Sweden was specifically tailored for Belgian and Japanese banks. It enabled the former to get around the Belgian banking reserve requirements on bank lending outside the EEC. As for the Japanese banks, the rules set down by the Ministry of Finance in Tokyo which govern their participation in syndicated credits are very tight but they do not apply to Floating Rate Notes.

The two convertibles announced last week followed the pattern of recent months. One was for a Japanese company Matusubita, the other for a U.S. oil drilling company, Helmerich and Payne. This second bond is convertible into shares of common stock of another U.S. concern, Sun Company.

After spreading to the French Franc sector—where the 10½ per cent convertible to 1991 for CIT-Alcatel was increased by FRF 20m to FRF 200m—the convertible vogue has now reached down-under. Metropolitan Estates Property Company is expected to launch an A\$10m five-year convertible with a coupon around 8½ per cent late this week. The issue will be privately placed among the same group of banks led by Morgan Grenfell, which arranged a U.S. dollar convertible for the same borrower last July.

U.S. BONDS

Fall in money supply eases tension

THE U.S. credit markets open on a brighter note today after a bunch of good news at the end of last week. And though the wild gyrations of the last month or so have made analysts wary of forecasting, the mood on the trading floors suggests that a decline in interest rates may be in the offing.

The biggest tonic was the latest money supply report on Friday which showed quite sharp drops in the two most widely followed measures: M-1 and M-1h, the first in six weeks. The declines brought the measures back down to the upper range of the Fed's annual targets, which are 3.5 to 6 per cent for M-1 and 4 to 6.5 per cent for M-1h. Clearly, there will have to be several weeks of declines before the markets feel

comfortable. But if, as many economists feel, the economy has slowed down a bit in September-October, the underlying pressures should be easing.

The other indicator which had a big bearing was the Producer Price Index for September which showed a drop of 0.2 per cent, its first in four years. It was probably exaggerated by mark-downs at the big automakers who wanted to clear out old inventory for the new model year which starts this month. But it was a big improvement over the previous month's gain of 1.5 per cent.

The market also drew comfort from a statement by Mr. Paul Volcker, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, that the markets had probably over-

reacted to the rise in rates. Mr. Volcker's remarks, which were provoked by an attack on Fed policy by President Carter, marked his first comments about the present state of credit.

Earlier in the week, the Fed had clearly been struggling to contain the surge in the key Fed funds rate (the overnight inter-bank rate) by supplying funds when it crept over 13 per cent. Its efforts were not wholly successful, but a Fed spokesman was quoted as saying that bank reserves had been unexpectedly tight.

Thus, while the surge in the prime rate from 13 to 14 per cent last week suggested a surge in the cost of money, developments at the sharp end of the market indicate things may be getting better, not worse.

But the market does face an immediate challenge: A huge volume of new offerings this week. After the comparative lull of September, well over \$1bn of new corporate and municipal bonds will be sold (including \$450m of Southern Bell T and T 40-year debentures) as well as \$1.5bn of 15-year treasury bonds. If the market can absorb all this without losing too much ground, traders will probably begin to talk more confidently of a rally.

U.S. INTEREST RATES (%)

	Week to Oct 3	Sept 27
Fed funds weekly avg.	13.38	11.22
3-month Treasury bill	11.36	11.15
3-month CDS	12.90	12.15
Treasury 30-yr. bond	11.67	11.58
Long-term AAA utility	13.38	13.50
Long-term AAA industrial	12.83	12.88

Source: Salomon Brothers, Estimates

CREDITS

BY PETER MONTAGNON

Revival in volume proves elusive

LATEST figures compiled by Morgan Guaranty Trust confirm the sharp decline in volume of syndicated loans so far this year. Now, credits arranged during the first nine months were only \$48.1bn compared with \$60.2bn in the same period of 1979.

The drop was sharpest in lending to developing countries which totalled \$23.8bn compared with \$36.9bn. Fewer credits were also granted to Comecon countries which took \$2.2bn compared with \$6.6bn, but these falls were partially offset by an increase of \$5.2bn to \$21.8bn in lending to industrialised nations.

European bankers are now firmly convinced that there is no hope of regaining the lost ground in the remaining three months of the year. Some suggest that there could be a flurry of new business following last week's International Monetary Fund meeting in Washington, but others say that the new rise in U.S. interest rates coupled with banks' continuing caution on lending to the Third World make even this prospect

remote. Moreover, the Bundesbank's decision last week to seek extra information on German lending to a select group of heavy borrowers could be a sign that regulatory authorities worldwide are beginning to tighten their grip on the market. If this happens, 1981 could turn out to be another slack year for syndicated loans.

One country meanwhile which still needs to raise a lot of funds this year is Brazil. Brazilian officials now say that the development bank BNDE will be the next public sector borrower for this country with an amount of about \$200m. There will be no four or five other deals of similar size between now and the end of the year some of them placed privately.

Brazil is understood to be ready to accept "realistic terms" on these credits. In the opinion of many banks this implies a marked upward movement in margins which on recent deals have been set at 1½ per cent over eight years.

Brazil has now raised about \$3.7bn of its \$12bn borrowing target for this year. In addition to the Public Sector deal it also hopes to raise about \$500m a month from now on through Resolution 63 borrowing by Brazilian commercial banks.

Another deal which is in the offing is a \$750m, 10-year financing for Alcoa Aluminio to finance a refinery and smelter in North East Brazil. The credit, which is being co-ordinated by Citibank, is expected to enter syndication early next month. Final terms are not settled but currently anticipated margins are on a split 1½-1½ per cent basis.

Elsewhere little change is expected to emerge when the Japanese Ministry of Finance officially revises quotas for Japanese banks' syndicated lending in the period October/November. The 20 per cent limit on Japanese bank participation in credits, which is already applied fairly flexibly, will remain. One loophole, which has emerged, however, is that

Japanese banks have been able to buy Floating Rate Notes without restriction. The latest Sweden issue was specially constructed to allow for this, for example, and it is not yet clear whether this loophole into the Euromarkets may be "tightened".

Among other deals, Zimbabwe is already embarked on its second Eurobond borrowing. Its state railways are seeking \$17m to finance purchase of track from South Africa. Terms are the same as those on the Air Zimbabwe deal, which, like this one, is managed by Mammfelters, Hanover and bears a split 1½-1½ per cent margin over five years.

Argentina's current \$300m Eurocredit for the state oil concern YPF is reported to be meeting a slow response in syndication. In part this is due to the belief of Eurobanker bankers that spreads for Argentina may rise further and in part to the large number of banks already in the lead management group.

BY DAVID LASCELLES

FT INTERNATIONAL BOND SERVICE

U.S. DOLLAR STRAIGHTS

Issued	Bid	Offer	Day	Week	Yield
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00

OTHER STRAIGHTS

Issued	Bid	Offer	Day	Week	Yield
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00

EUROBOND TURNOVER (nominal value in \$m)

U.S. \$ bonds	Credit	Euroland
1,089.1	2,805.3	3,207.4
Previous week	1,071.7	3,207.4
Other bonds	275.0	448.7
Previous week	262.2	318.2

STRAIGHT INDEX AND YIELD

Medium term	Long term
Oct. 3... 100.00	100.00
Sept. 26... 100.00	100.00
High '80... 100.00	100.00
Low '80... 100.00	100.00

DEUTSCHE MARK STRAIGHTS

Issued	Bid	Offer	Day	Week	Yield
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
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STRAIGHT INDEX AND YIELD

Medium term	Long term
Oct. 3... 100.00	100.00
Sept. 26... 100.00	100.00
High '80... 100.00	100.00
Low '80... 100.00	100.00

CONVERTIBLES

Issued	Bid	Offer	Day	Week	Yield
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00
8½ Oz. 10% 90	100	100	100	100	10.00

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Sparebanken Oslo Akershus

Burgan Bank S.A.K. - Kuwait **The Industrial Bank of Kuwait K.S.C.**
Bergen Bank **Christiania Bank og Kreditkasse**
Den Norske Creditbank **Union Bank of Norway Ltd.**

Abu Dhabi Investment Company
Alahli Bank of Kuwait K.S.C.
Al-Bahrain Arab African Bank (EC) **Arab International Finance Ltd. - ARINFI**
Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait B.S.C. **The Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank Nederland NV**
Financial Group of Kuwait K.S.C. **Genossenschaftliche Zentralbank AG - Vienna**
Jordan Securities Corporation **Kuwait Financial Centre s.a.k.**
Kuwait International Finance Co. SAK (KIFCO) **Kuwait Investment Co. S.A.K.**
Kuwait Pacific Finance Company Limited **The Nikko Securities Co. (Europe) Ltd.**
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August 1980

FINANCIAL TIMES SURVEY

Monday October 6 1980

Colombia

Colombia's agricultural and mineral riches could make it one of the most prosperous countries in the world. Yet it remains underdeveloped, despite an unpredictable series of booms in the late 1970s. Strenuous efforts are now being made to bring the country out of its backwardness.



High rise and low life mingle in Bogotá

Riding on the roller coaster

By Hugh O'Shaughnessy

COLOMBIA IS the quintessential Latin America—or at least the quintessence of what non-Latin Americans think that Latin America is. More than any other country of the region it contains physically within its borders and psychologically in the character of its inhabitants those attributes which are looked on as making up the Latin American recipe. It is first of all a big, lightly populated and extremely varied country. Its topography ranges from the palm-lined beaches of the Caribbean through impenetrable jungles on the coast and in the Amazon basin to cooler, richly productive highlands and high mountain peaks,

soma covered with eternal snows. The country contains all sort of riches which, if they were developed with the skills that the Dutch put into their market gardening or the Swiss put into their watchmaking, would make the inhabitants among the most prosperous on earth. Apart from the agricultural riches of the country there is gold and some of the best and biggest deposits of nickel and coal known to man.

But Colombia is not Holland or Switzerland. It is a developing country with just a century and a half of independent existence. Only three decades ago it had a population which was half illiterate and of whom 70 per cent lived in the countryside. Three decades ago, too, it was in the middle of what was simply known as *la violencia*, a spasm in the population which was set off by the killing in Bogotá of a populist leader, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, which degenerated into battles between members of the liberal and the conservative parties and which degenerated yet again into killing for its own sake. Scores of thousands of people died. Nothing was gained.

The savagery of *la violencia* left deep and enduring scars on the psyche of Colombia, which the politicians hoped would be soothed by the alternation in power of each of the traditional parties. Apart from an interlude of military dictatorship under General

Gustavo Rojas Pinilla this system of power sharing has survived to this day.

After a time in which a Liberal president had, by law, to follow a Conservative to office the present situation has emerged under which the party whose candidate wins enough votes to claim the presidency has to make space in his cabinet for ministers of the other party. Thus President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, a Liberal, has five Conservatives in his Government, two from each of the two leading factions of the Conservative Party and a fifth independent conservative. Oratorical powers rather than the merits of a candidate's programme or the strength of his organisational abilities are the keys to political office. Administrative and financial scandal is not uncommon in Colombia.

Untamed

To paint such a portrait of Colombia is to confirm the stereotype of a Latin American country which is potentially fabulously rich but untamed and difficult to deal with. But to leave the matter there and write off Colombia as a violent and politically intractable country would be to do less than justice to the efforts that have been made to bring the country out of its underdevelopment and to prevent it falling into the sort of deadening political totalitarianism that afflicts many countries of Latin America and in particular those of southern South America.

In the past three decades the

population has increased by 150 per cent and, whereas it had been 70 per cent rural, it is now 70 per cent urban, the most enterprising of the peasant having flocked into the cities in the hope of bettering themselves.

In the period the gross domestic product of Colombia has risen more than 34 times. The development process has however been beset with sudden and startling developments which have made it not smooth and sustained but often jerky and unpredictable. It was, for instance, entirely unpredictable that frosts in Brazil should have all but wiped out that country's coffee crop in 1977 and brought a tremendous bonanza to the Colombian coffee trade which for years had been in the doldrums.

In 1977 Colombian coffee was fetching \$2.40 a pound, three times the price it had fetched two years previously. As a result, a surge of money came into the country, transforming the fortunes of many Colombians. The coffee bonanza has passed and coffee prices are today no more than half what they were at their peak though a strong selling campaign has doubled the quantity exported.

Another and more dubious bonanza has come more recently in the shape of the big trade in narcotics which, according to what estimate of earnings you believe, could be bringing into the country \$150m or \$250m.

The bonanza has brought immense political and social

problems in that the trade is illegal and has involved greatly increased corruption and violence and has, despite government arguments to the contrary, severely increased inflationary pressures.

Yet at the same time it has brought a new source of wealth to the countryside and has given cash to peasants which they could not have dreamed of a decade ago.

Bonanza

The 1980s could bring another big bonanza as the mining industry booms with nickel from the Cerro Matoso project and coal from the deposits of El Correjón boosting the balance of trade.

Thus a series of booms have helped and are helping the economy to grow. The effect has often been that of a sickening rollercoaster but despite the difficulties and the ups and downs the economy has expanded at an increasingly fast pace.

A decade and a half ago Colombia was deeply in debt to the outside world and its international reserves were a minus quantity. Today they stand at more than \$500, nine times what they were five years ago and the fear there once was that the economic growth would be strangled by the lack of foreign exchange has today evaporated.

It would be pleasant to report that the political system of the country had grown in strength *pari passu* with growth of the economy. Such however,

is not the case. Various facts demonstrate that the political system of power-sharing between Liberals and Conservatives, while mitigating the murderous hostility there once was between the two parties, has not captured the loyalty and support of much of the electorate. Abstention at elections is high and it is common even at national elections for no more than one voter in three to turn out to register his choice.

Colombia too has suffered a continuous and nagging campaign from a number of guerrilla groups. The membership of these groups is not numerous. According to the army there are no more than about 1,500 members in all the groups together. Nor are their politics very clear.

The M-19 which pulled off the daring coup of capturing a score of ambassadors and diplomats at the beginning of the year seems to be made up of the most diverse of political hedges whose leaders have on different occasions called themselves nationalists, liberals, socialists, social democrats and anti-imperialists.

The other main group, the FARC, claims loyalty to Moscow and the Colombian-Moscow line Communist Party. The Communists in Moscow, and Bogotá appear to have a very ambiguous attitude to them, not overtly supporting them yet not

entirely cutting their links with them. (In Colombia the Kremlin, by maintaining relations with both the Turbay Government and its guerrilla opponents is exhibiting, albeit in mitigated form, that political opportunism which elsewhere in Latin America, in Argentina, say, and in Bolivia, allows it to keep warm ties of friendship with regimes of the extreme Right, while maintaining its Marxist-Leninist rhetoric.)

The divisions among the guerrillas are so deep that they are incapable of co-operating, but their very existence is a sign of active revolt against a system which, according to the government's critics on the Left and the Right, has become too inward looking and too unconcerned with Colombia's social problems of large unemployment, big pockets of indigence and wide disparities of wealth.

Military

Critics, again on the Right and on the Left, accuse the government of allowing the military too much say in government and of permitting them under the regulations which govern the state of siege that has regulated life in Colombia for much of the past 30 years to disregard citizens' rights.

Yet even the government's severe critics recognise that the present political system, imperfect and insensitive as it undoubtedly is to some of the problems of Colombia, has maintained a margin of liberty

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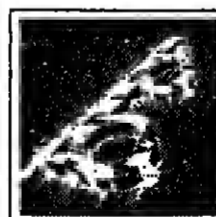
of expression and of debate which is not to be found in many countries of the region. The debates which are going on in Bogotá today about the state of human rights, the need for political reform and the place of the army in society, carry hope for a peaceful evolution of Colombian society without more of the violent traumas that the country itself suffered 30 years ago and which some of its neighbours are continuing to undergo. If like Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru, its partners in the Andean pact, Colombia can maintain a healthy pluralism, it will help the political evolution of Latin America.



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مكة المكرمة

COLOMBIA II



Vast areas of Colombia have virtually no manufacturing industry, relying instead on more traditional activities—such as the smallholding in the Cauca valley

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BY SELECTED ITEMS

	1965	1970	1975	1976	1979	1980
Current inflows	495.8	800.0	1,788.8	3,598.7	4,622.6	3,671.0
Coffee	346.7	405.5	634.5	1,702.5	1,769.4	1,328.4
Gold	—	7.9	29.7	33.8	74.2	179.6
Others	149.1	386.6	1,124.6	1,862.4	2,779.0	2,163.0
Current outflows	387.4	858.6	1,758.7	2,795.4	3,176.7	3,176.7
Oil and gasoline	—	—	26.3	243.1	571.0	346.1
Others	387.4	858.6	1,732.4	2,552.3	2,917.1	2,830.6
Capital account and errors	-47.4	114.1	88.2	-146.3	485.9	491.8
Net international reserves	-61.5	152.0	547.3	3,481.8	4,106.1	5,125.2

REAL WAGES

	% Increase Aug. 78/Aug. '80
Rural areas	20.4
Intermediate cities	9.9
Largest cities	8.7

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH

	GDP (%)	Population (%)	Per capita GDP (%)
1965-70	5.9	2.8	3.0
1970-75	6.1	2.7	3.3
1975-80	5.8	2.2	3.5

Luck and hard work put foreign reserves in black

A DECADE and a half ago Colombia was, in terms of its international financial relations at least, a hopeless case. At the end of 1965 its gross international reserves were down to \$145.3m and net of liabilities they stood at minus \$61.5m. Two years later the position had eased fractionally so that the net reserves stood at minus \$36.3m. Today the reserves are back in the black with a vengeance and stand around the \$5.1bn mark; the international banks are hurrying to lend to Colombia.

The country's slow climb out of the financial hole it found itself in during the 1960s was the result of a mixture of hard work and good luck. In the mid-1970s the disasters which hit other coffee growers, notably Brazil, spared Colombia, so that the country was able to coin money selling its coffee abroad at bumper prices. Since then coffee prices have dropped a little from the peak of \$2.50 a pound in 1977 to just under \$2 today. But the Colombian coffee growers have managed to double their export production so the country is making much more money now than then—\$1.1bn in the first seven months of 1980.

The financial renaissance of the 1970s was not all due to the good luck of the coffee growers. During the decade the Government encouraged industries which had barely ever exported before to sell abroad, so the balance of trade was boosted by big sales of leather and textiles,

flowers and many other products. Meanwhile, in the shadows an export trade was growing up in narcotics which today could be worth perhaps \$1.5bn in a full year. The income from marijuana has compensated for a falling-off in non-traditional exports which have been priced out of some international markets by rising domestic costs.

The ease with which the potential wealth of Colombia could be realised has been well illustrated this year with the flowering of a new gold industry which could well add a further \$400m to the reserves in the course of this year. The balance of payments surplus is likely to be between \$900m and \$1.4bn. The outlook is good in general. Two big mining projects, mentioned in greater detail elsewhere in this survey, will in the next few years begin to bring in revenues from sales of nickel and coal, while the farm sector could become much more important if the plains on the eastern side of the Andes were used to raise even a fraction of the cattle they could carry.

Oilfields

The only black cloud on the horizon is the calamitous necessity for Colombia, for long a net exporter of oil, to have to buy in increasing quantities of fuel. The last year Colombia exported oil was 1975. Since then, partly because of the distressing financial state of

BASIC STATISTICS

Area	1,138,336 sq. km.
Population	25.52 m
GDP	\$19.57 bn*
Per capita income	\$767*
Total Trade (\$m)	
Exports	2,381
(Coffee: 2,018 or 60%)	
Imports	3,365
Trade with UK (\$m)	
Exports	23.87
Imports	52.26
1979 figures.	
* 1979 dollar equivalent.	

the Government-owned oil company, which is obliged to sell petrol at levels much lower than the world prices, there has been inadequate exploration. Though the country has large areas where oil is likely to be found little new productive capacity has been discovered which would offset the declining productivity of existing oilfields.

Last year 37 wells were to be drilled. In fact only 29 were, and the only promising show of oil was discovered so far off the beaten track, in the Amazon Basin, that it does not at present justify the investment required to bring it to market. Last year Colombia had to spend \$189.5m on oil imports and by the middle of the decade the figure could well have risen to \$500m or more.

Though the country may have to face some strain on its balance of payments in the middle of the decade there seem likely to be few difficulties in the years immediately ahead. A consultative group of lender countries and institutions convened last year in Paris by the World Bank to study Colombia declared itself happy with the foreign borrowing requirements of \$5.9bn in the 1979-82 period suggested by the Government for its development plans. There can be no doubt that Colombia could get much more money for its public sector plans if it sought it.

If the task of raising finance is not a particularly difficult one, that of maintaining the value of the peso at some is far more complicated. Last year saw severe inflation by Colombian standards, when the cost of living rose by around 30 per cent compared with less than 20 per cent the year before.

This year the Finance Minister has assured the country that he will be able to keep it under 25 per cent. But the effect of the big development plans, the appearance of a great deal of funds from the narcotics trade which circulate outside the orthodox banking system and the rapid rise in the exchange reserves will combine to put Dr. Garcia Parra's word to the test. Various commentators, the U.S. Embassy included, have forecast that the rate of inflation will be closer to last year's level than 25 per cent. The Government, however, points to the effect of a credit squeeze and a brake on money creation to maintain the validity of its aims.

Hugh O'Shaughnessy



Printing, an important industry in Colombia, made a considerable contribution to the export drive of the early 1970s. But since 1975, protectionism has made foreign markets increasingly difficult

High interest rates divert investment from industry to financial sector

COLOMBIAN industrialists are among the most vociferous critics of the Government's policy of keeping interest rates high. They complain industry is no longer an attractive risk to investors, who can gain huge returns in the financial sector.

Apart from short-term considerations, the National Association of Industrialists (ANDI) considers that Colombia's industrial growth during the 1970s was far from satisfactory. Production grew by a respectable average of 6 per cent a year, but manufacturing's share of GNP remained steady at just under 20 per cent.

Although it would be an exaggeration to say that industry is in the doldrums, the sector has certainly lost the impetus of the fifties and sixties, when import substitution was in full swing. In 1950, industry contributed less than 15 per cent to GNP; 20 years later the figure had risen to 19.3 per cent. Meanwhile Bogotá and Cali had attracted a high proportion of new plants, reducing Medellín's early dominance.

Medellín still produces about two-thirds of the country's textiles and more than half of the tobacco industry is concentrated in the province of Antioquia. But both sectors have been badly hit by the growth of smuggling, and unemployment in Medellín has topped 100,000.

Local natural resources have provided the basis for the development of industries such as food, drink and tobacco, petrochemicals, wood and

cement. Only now, however, are serious efforts being made to exploit deposits of nickel, coking and steam coal, copper and uranium. These are large scale projects which require public and foreign funds, and complement decentralisation policies.

Heavy state investment in energy and transport should also help to resolve some of the worst bottlenecks in Colombia's main ports and in the electricity sector—power has to be rationed in the capital whenever the dry season is prolonged, and severe shortages are expected over the next two years.

Compared with most other Latin American countries, Colombia's industry is relatively independent. National capital predominates, raw materials are mainly local, and, until recently, industry catered almost entirely to the domestic market. Since the late sixties there has been a big increase in foreign trade, with both manufactured exports and imports for the production of intermediate and capital goods growing rapidly.

Export drive

The export drive of the early 'seventies boosted textiles, sugar, printed material, chemicals and leather and wood articles, but after 1975, with the growth of protectionism in industrial countries, it became difficult to find foreign buyers for manufactured products. Expansion plans went ahead, and companies were using a much higher proportion of their

industrial capacity by the end of the decade, but hardly any new ventures were undertaken.

Foreign capital, restricted since 1971 by the Andean Pact's Decision 24, is strongly represented in chemicals, the vehicle industry, synthetic fibres, drugs, paper and metalworking. Industry as a whole attracted nearly 60 per cent of foreign investment (excluding oil) between 1967 and 1979.

The U.S. and Switzerland lead the field, but West Germany and France, as well as Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador have made significant contributions.

Colombian industry has been the envy of other Andean Pact countries for its greater diversification and efficiency, but recent problems in, for example, the textile sector, point to a weakening of its competitive position. Protection for textiles, shoes and clothing is equivalent to 116 per cent in import tariffs; for food and drink the level is 78 per cent; for metalworking, 51 per cent.

All these figures will soon have to be adjusted to the Pact's Common External Tariff, and Colombia's industrialists are adamant that the customs privileges enjoyed by Ecuador and Bolivia should not be allowed to damage full economic integration.

Only a quarter of the economically active urban population is employed in industry, and industrial jobs have grown slowly in comparison with the informal sector. Although medium and small establishments contribute less than 15 per cent of industrial production, they provide nearly half

the employment, and are strongly represented in cities under half a million.

Vast areas of the country have very little manufacturing apart from small-scale food and drink plants. Some 15 of Colombia's 26 provinces contribute less than 1 per cent each to total industrial output. Incentives to draw modern industry away from the big cities have so far had relatively little effect.

Archipelago

A group of small-scale industrialists recently reported that 20 out of 23 factories set up in an industrial park at Duitama, north of Bogotá, had closed down mainly because of credit problems. An industrial archipelago, to be built on six islands, is planned for Cartagena, and Korean and Italian firms are among the first to commit themselves to investments. The archipelago project is intended to create 20,000 jobs within 12 years.

Intermediate and capital goods industries have grown fastest in recent years, but food and drink, clothing and textiles still account for nearly half of industrial production. As they already satisfy some 95 per cent of internal demand, there is little potential for the expansion of non-durable consumer goods—unless export markets can be opened up again.

Much of the machinery in this sector is obsolete, and the giant (by Colombian standards) textile companies have had to reduce prices by as much as 20 per cent to compete with

smuggled goods. Some 132m metres of cloth are reportedly being brought in illegally, and one of the biggest local producers, Fabricato, is running radio commercials to try to dissuade Colombians from buying contraband textiles.

A massive injection of capital is needed, say the industrialists, and the Government should take a more positive role in strengthening the manufacturing sector.

The state Industrial Development Institute, which sponsored several big projects in the 'sixties, has been less active in recent years. Apart from its support for vehicle and steel companies, Unless major investments are made in steel, pulp and paper, cement, fertilisers, rubber and petrochemicals, imports of these products must rocket during the 'eighties—and Colombia already has a high oil import bill to finance.

The boom of the early 'seventies took non-traditional manufactured exports from \$95m in 1970 to \$329m in 1974. This year they represented 57 per cent of all exports. But during the second half of the decade, earnings from industrial products barely maintained the same value in real terms, and their share of total exports fell to 28 per cent in 1979.

However, many industrialists are more optimistic about the prospects for foreign sales than they are about the home market, which, they say, will only expand during the 'eighties if income distribution improves.

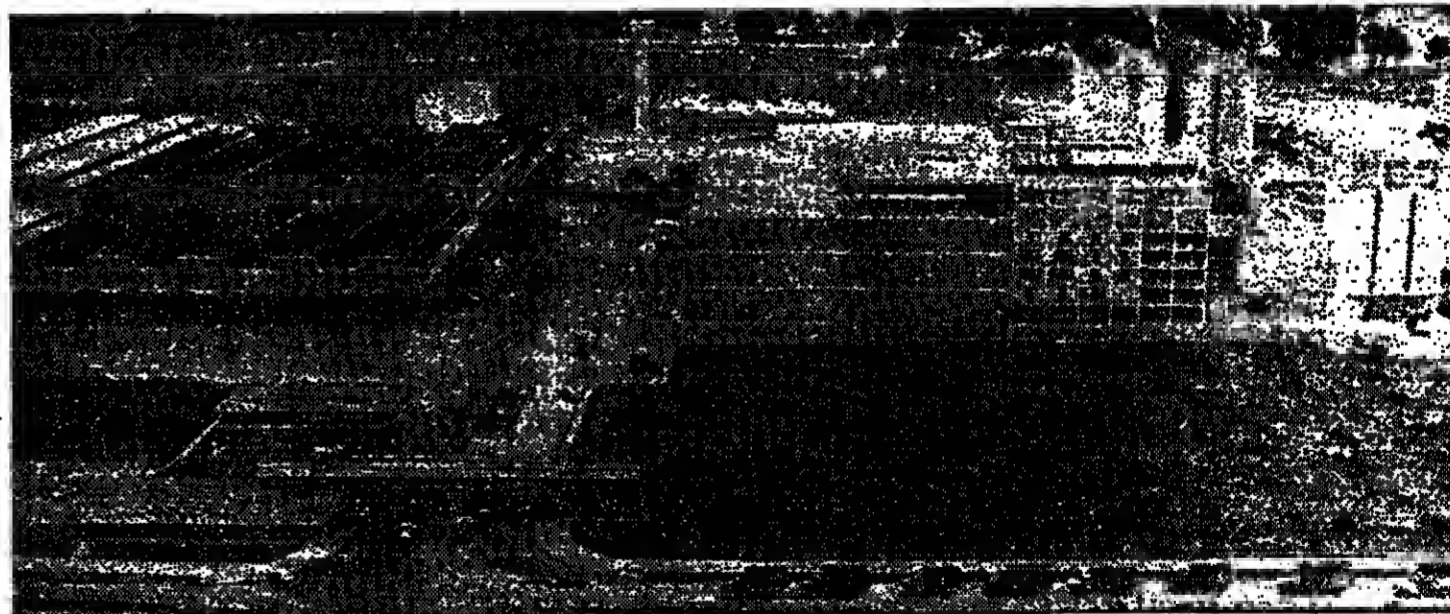
Sarita Kendall



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COLOMBIA III

Giant coal project goes ahead with foreign investment

"THERE ARE about twenty big companies here—BP, Shell, Atlantic Richfield and many others—and we're all on our knees begging to be given access to some of Colombia's coal." The representative of one of the major oil companies was being startlingly frank about the high level of interest in Colombia's coal.

So far, however, only one coal project is going ahead, though it is one of the biggest civil engineering projects in the Western hemisphere. By the end of the decade, the joint venture between the Colombian Government's carbocel and Exxon's interior could be producing 25m tonnes a year at El Cerrejon on the Guajira peninsula in the far north-east of the country. The total investment will be \$3bn.

The immense riches of El Cerrejon have been known for more than a century. Indeed, a French engineer conceived a scheme which would have made Colombia the provider of fuel to many of the coal stations of the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico one hundred years ago.

In 1975, under the Government of President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, Dr. Jaime Garcia Parra, then Mines and Energy Minister, negotiated a deal with Exxon to begin exploiting the potential of the

deposit. Coal is to be found all over Colombia, round Bogotá, in the Cauca valley along the Pacific coast, and near the mouth of the Atrato river.

Most of it is found far inland and could never be used on a large scale without huge investments in transport, though Brazil has signed an agreement with Colombia to examine and exploit the coaling coal near the capital. Of the two deposits near the sea, El Cerrejon is of higher quality. It has a lower sulphur content than the one near the Atrato river, which runs through some of the wettest and boggiest country in the world.

Carbocel

In the next few years, Carbocel will be preparing for production. It will have to move 180m tonnes of soil and rock a year to reach the coal. El Cerrejon should be selling 15m tonnes of coal by 1983.

Even before this happens, the area will have to be equipped with a 150 km railway linking El Cerrejon with the coast. At the coast a port will have to be built. The site chosen, on a very inhospitable coastline, is Bahia Portete—now mainly used by the active, rich and violent smuggling community of the Guajira.

The smugglers' launches will have to be superseded by accommodation for ships of up to 100,000 tons and later of up to 250,000 tons. The magnitude of the task is shown in the fact that at present, no port in Colombia can take a ship of more than 60,000 tons.

In addition to the railway which is being built to the highest standards at considerable cost, the mine and the port will be linked by road. President Turbay announced last month that the railway between El Cerrejon and Bahia Portete would eventually be linked up with the country's main railway network, which joins Bogotá to the port of Santa Marta along the valley of the Magdalena River.

Near the mine at Barrancas, 3,000 houses are to be built to accommodate the workers needed at the site. An electricity supply and telecommunications have to be installed.

At the pit, draglines with a capacity of 30 cubic yards will feed a fleet of tipper trucks which can carry up to 170 short tons.

Although it will be five years or more before coal from El Cerrejon is ready for sale, both partners in the venture, Carbocel and Exxon, have already begun their marketing efforts. The contract between the partners—both have 50

per cent stakes in the project—stipulates that each will have the right to market half the production. In addition, each will have the right to meet half any order obtained by the other.

Marketing

Exxon appears to have come to an agreement with a Danish buyer, while Carbocel is said to be negotiating with Spain, among others. Exxon's decades of marketing experience give it a strong lead, while Carbocel seems to be playing more emphasis on government-to-government deals, in which the authorities in Bogotá can be of help. Europe is seen as the prime selling area, but some coal may go to U.S. buyers on the Gulf coast.

Raising the necessary capital will be complicated, if not for Exxon, then for the Colombian company. The Colombian Government is expecting a good deal of help from the international institutions. Speaking in Rinhacha, the town nearest to the site, last month, President Turbay referred to the "significant financial and institutional effort" required by the project.

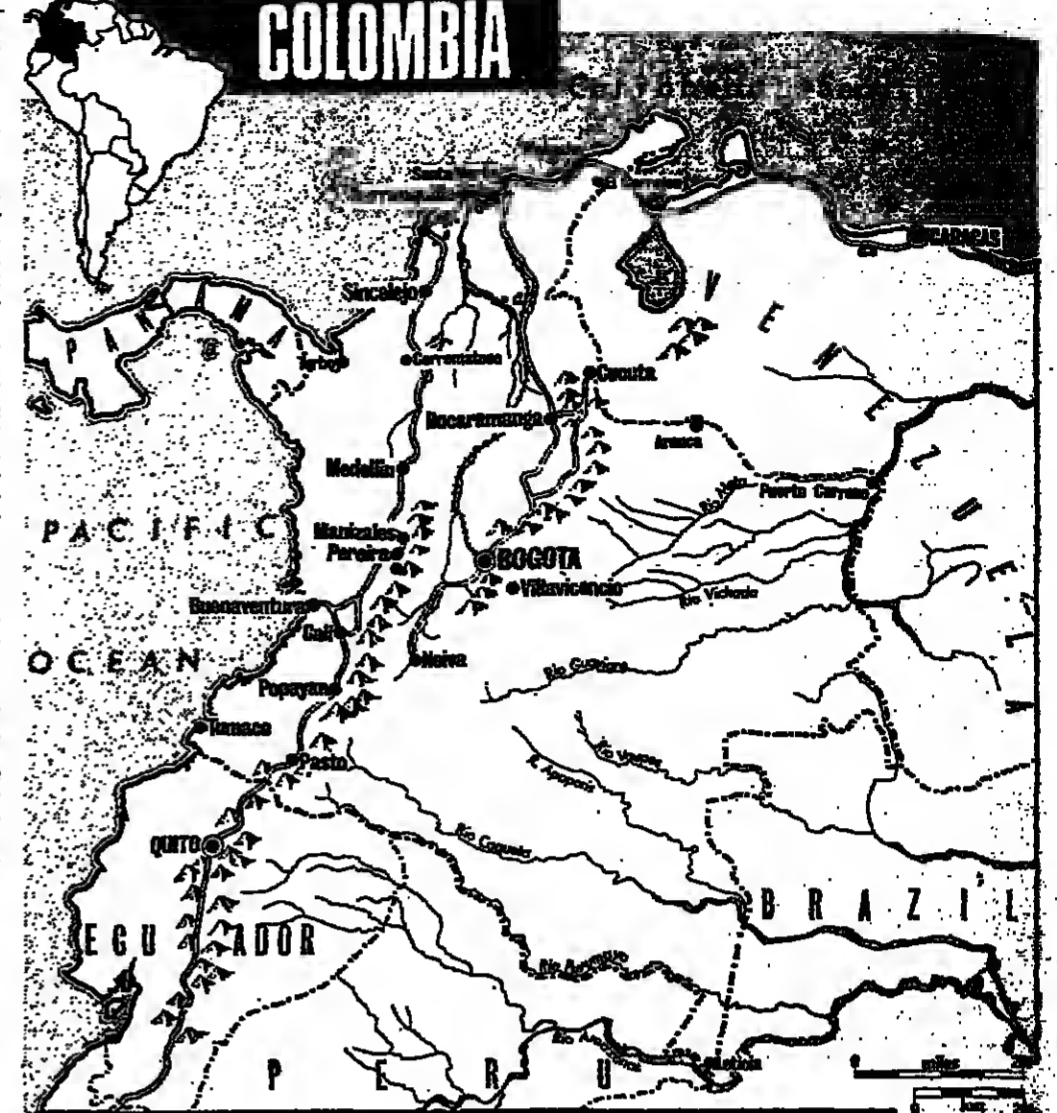
Colombia's capacity to borrow is very large. The country has reserves amounting to 15 months' imports, a relatively low level of indebtedness, and conservative financial attitudes.

The Government should therefore have little difficulty in eventually finding its share of the money.

There remain doubts in the minds of some observers about the smoothness with which the project will be executed. Already, nationalist voices in Bogotá have criticised the conditions granted Exxon, which are seen as all too concessionary. Though Colombia does not have the tradition of ultra-nationalism found, for instance, in Argentina under the successive Peronista governments, such sentiments are not entirely unknown in the country. There are those, too, who warn that Colombia has not yet developed the technical and managerial expertise to manage a complex relationship with a big multinational company like Exxon.

The Government's deal with Exxon covers only one of three sections of the El Cerrejon coalfield. So it is going cautiously before signing any more contracts on the other two sections. These two could well become as productive as the first, and other international companies are eyeing them with the greatest interest. The present project could become even bigger as the world, seeing the dangers of too great a reliance on oil, discovers once again the advantages of coal.

H.O.S.



Nickel: a new force in the world market

CERRO MATOSO is a small project compared to El Cerrejon—as are most projects in the world. But it is big for Colombia and will have the important effect of bringing the country on to the world international metals scene.

In the early part of 1982, Colombia will start exporting ferro-nickel from a deposit of high grade ore 250 miles north-west of Bogotá. By then, about \$350m will have been invested by Cerro Matoso S.A., a corporation in which Billiton, the Shell metals subsidiary, will have a 35 per cent stake; Econiquel, a Colombian semi-State company, 45 per cent; and Concol, an affiliate of Hanna Mining and Standard Oil of California, the remaining 20 per cent.

By early 1984 the company hopes to be exporting 22,600 tonnes of nickel to Billiton, which wants to become a power in the international nickel market.

For a decade, the project had been nursed along by Hanna which, despite passing interest from Japan was never able to get it fully developed. Billiton's interest, however, helped financing plans. These plans made substantial progress at the end of last year, when Cerro Matoso S.A. signed \$225.7m investment package which included \$80m from the World Bank, \$57m from the Export-Import bank of the U.S., and \$120m from a consortium led by Chase Manhattan.

A good deal of work has already been carried out at the

site of the open-pit mine near Montelíbano in the province of Córdoba, which will eventually be producing 850,000 tonnes of ore a year. Piles are being driven for the rotary kiln/electric furnace that will reduce the ore into ferro-nickel containing between 35 and 40 per cent nickel.

Heavy plant

Some of the heavy plant has begun to arrive at the Atlantic port of Cartagena from where it will be taken by barge up the Magdalena river to the site. Over the next 18 months, Cerro Matoso hopes to stockpile 1m tonnes of ore ready for the reduction plant when it comes into operation.

In April 1982, Cerro Matoso should be processing its first

consignment for transport down the river to Cartagena. The Colombian Government can demand an 8 per cent royalty paid in kind, under the terms of the 25-year concession granted on the ore. The company has to make its production available to Colombia and other Latin American consumers at international prices.

If export prices were no more than \$2 a pound, the nickel from Cerro would make a useful contribution of around \$100m to Colombia's export revenue. Through Cerro Matoso nickel, Shell will be taking an important step in its diversification out of oil. In the process, another major producer of nickel will emerge: for many years, the metals production has been dominated by a very small number of large companies headed by International Nickel. Life at the site, as in most of Colombia, is very tough. The

bush covering the orebody is alive with wild creatures, from giant snakes to parrots, and human violence is not far from the surface.

Córdoba also has its share of marijuana plantations, and this does not make for tranquillity as growers and traders struggle to safeguard their illegal export traffic against the best efforts of the Government and the army. Nor is the guerrilla problem ever far from the minds of those involved in the activities of multi-national companies in Colombia.

Nevertheless, those in charge of the project are confident of future progress. And economic analysts are already incorporating their projections for Colombia's balance of payments in the 1980s.

H.O.S.

Eldorado revisited as gold-mining booms

COLOMBIA WAS Eldorado at the time of the Spanish conquest: it is becoming Eldorado again in the 1980's.

In the sixteenth century, Europe seized with enthusiasm on the legend of El Dorado—the "gold-plated man," a legendary Indian whose name was later applied to a region believed to possess fabulous wealth, somewhere within the borders of what is today Colombia and Venezuela.

The legendary Indian had a basis in fact for the primitive inhabitants of the region were master gold-workers. The pre-Columbian exhibits in the gold museum of the Banco de la República, in Bogotá, bear eloquent witness to their skill.

But after the coming of the Spaniards, the gold which the aborigines had produced and worked seemed to come to nothing, and the Spanish kings never recovered the golden hoards their colonisers had promised them.

Mining and panning for alluvial gold continued spasmodically over the centuries. Records for this century show that the highest output was registered in 1941, when just over 20 tonnes were produced. During most of the last decade output fluctuated between just

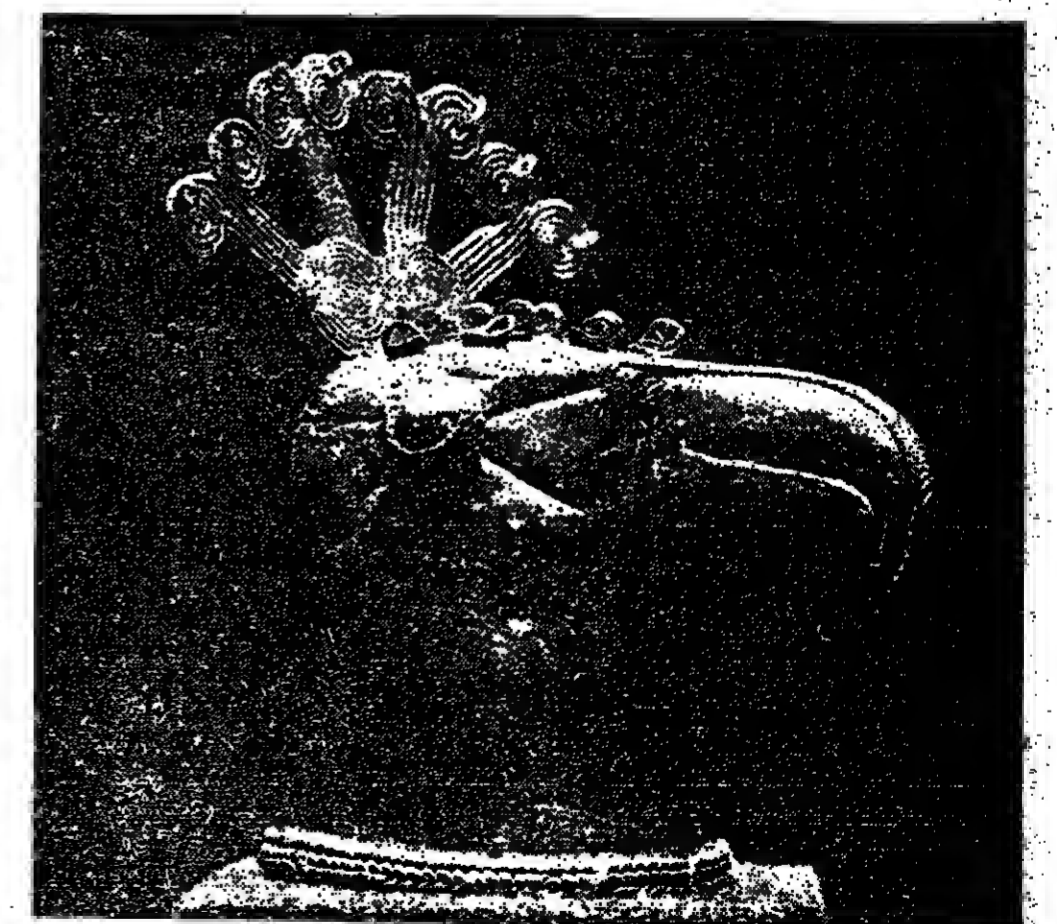
under six and just over eight tonnes a year.

But the recent sharp rises in the metal price have been doing wonders for output over the last year or more. Production this year could begin to match the levels of the early 1940's and should provide a very welcome \$400m for the Banco de la República, which buys all the gold not needed by Colombian manufacturers.

The bank has set up a network of buying stations where the metal is roughly assayed. Then it is sent to Medellín for refining by one of the bank's contractors, and stored away in the bank's vaults there. The new gold joins the existing reserves, much of which is valued at its pre-1978 price and has not been revalued to current levels.

The bank is now pressing the Government to get on with its promised measures to help the industry, which will enable the prospectors to improve their techniques. "Country people are washing the riverbeds practically with the same tools used by our first aborigines," it says. With better techniques much more gold is there for the taking.

H.O.S.



Happy eagle in the gold museum at Bogotá—one of many exhibits which bear witness to the remarkable skill of the country's aboriginal inhabitants before the coming of the Spanish conquistadores

S.K.

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IT WAS emeralds that proved Colombia's biggest attraction to the Spanish conquistadors, but the location of the mines producing the deepest green stones remained a secret of the Muzo Indians, even though it led to the tribe's extermination. The mine today known as Muzo, legend has it, was found by accident when a Spanish lieutenant's horse was lamed by an immense crystal.

Recent exploitation of the mines has been no less harried by accident and violence, and a rich natural resource is still of little benefit to the country. The State mining company Cpas. Económicas made so heavy a loss because of employee thefts and a partial take-over of the mining area by gangsters that it was forced to give up its legal monopoly of emerald production and invite bids for concessions. The private companies now working the Muzo and Coscuez mines claim that production is so low that they should be allowed to renegotiate the fixed amounts payable to the Government.

The perfect Muzostone—large, flawless, deep-coloured and full of fire—can be priced up to ten times higher than a diamond but it has no industrial value.

With the recent growth of investment in tangibles, the emerald has become a favourite with gem experts, speculators and even Japanese connoisseurs. A small number of foreign buyers have a firm hold on the market for the top quality stones and the largest brokerage houses are almost exclusively Japanese.

One of the specialist freelance buyers working on commission for a few European clients always carries a briefcase on his Bogotá purchasing trips containing a microscope to check the crystal structure of stones that interest him. Synthetic emerald production is now so sophisticated that only a microscope can prove whether minute inclusions are natural or have been forged in a laboratory in Tokyo or Los Angeles. Though many fakes are too crude for any client but an unsuspecting tourist,

synthetics can be good enough to fool experts.

Colombia's mines produce about 95 per cent of the world's quality emeralds and are concentrated in an area 70km by 20 km of lawless mountains and jungle. The chance to make a fortune is an inevitable draw for all manner of drifters and desperadoes, and hundreds sneaked into the mines to wash the river beds for stones, to tunnel secretly under company property and even to live off the fortunes of others. Violence and killings became commonplace.

When the death toll passed twenty a week in mid-1974 the army was forced to move in to expel some 20,000 clandestine prospectors and close the almost bankrupt mines.

Concessions

Not surprisingly, an attempt to interest foreign companies in concessions produced not a single valid bid and in 1977 Muzo was leased out to two main syndicates with members including some old-timers who had started their fortunes as prospectors. Partners in the Empresa Minera Boyacense complain that the heavy running costs and tax payments to the Ministry of Mines make it impossible to invest in the new equipment and infrastructure needed to make a profit from the increasingly scarce gem veins.

Emerald exports for 1979 are officially given as about \$105m. This gives an apparent increase of 250 per cent on the previous year but the great majority of emerald transactions take place without any records and can be used to cover up or provide explanations for money from illicit business. So the drop in emerald exports recorded for the first half of 1980 does not necessarily bear any relation to current production rates. A smaller mine near Muzo is up for bids, and it will be interesting to see whether there are any takers who believe they can turn emerald mining into a good and legal business.

مكتبة النجف

COLOMBIA IV

Small farmers given strong Government support

COLOMBIA'S tropical position, combined with altitudes that range from sea level to over 5,000 metres, give the country an extraordinary variety of climates—and agricultural products. The rice, bananas and cotton of the lowland plains and valleys change to coffee, maize and oranges on slopes above 1,000 metres; higher up, potatoes, barley, apples and peaches are grown. Many crops can be sown all the year round, although in some areas the length of the dry season and occasional frosts are limitations.

In fact lack of rainfall can only too often be blamed for the vagaries of agricultural production. This year droughts have affected Tolima and the Cauca Valley—areas with good yields and a higher degree of mechanisation than the rest of the country—and cotton, maize and sorghum production have suffered. But despite the complaints of farmers, directed at

God and the Government indiscriminately, agriculture has more than kept pace with population growth in recent years.

One of the greatest problems is the relatively poor performance of traditional products destined for domestic consumption, and the Government has been giving strong support to "integrated rural development programmes (DRI)" aimed at farmers with up to 20 hectares. Some 80 per cent of all landholdings fall into this category, representing only 12 per cent of the country's agricultural land but producing two thirds of the basic foodstuffs for the local market.

Since 1976 three international organisations—the Inter American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency—have been financing DRI projects in eight provinces. Most are concentrated in Andean regions where the problems of the smallholder are

most acute, but perhaps the most successful approach has been that of the Canadians in Córdoba and Sucre on the Caribbean coast. The prime aim of the DRI programme was to raise production and productivity, according to the Government—and though there have been successes in this area, a more elusive objective has been achieved: political stability.

Confrontations

Sucre has long been a region of violent confrontations between peasants and large landowners, and combative peasant organisations carried out a series of land invasions in the mid-1970s. Since the DRI project began invasions have stopped and more and more peasants are being attracted by the development packages—schools, health posts, rural roads and electricity—being handed out by the Government.

As a substitute for land reform DRI has little to offer

on the surface—there is no attempt to resolve the land distribution problem. But rural standards of living have improved in many DRI areas and emigration has slowed down. In Sucre some 60 per cent of the direct beneficiaries do not own their land, so the programme is reaching groups barely touched by earlier rural policies.

For once, financial resources are not a limiting factor—\$35m are available for Córdoba-Sucre, \$14m for them contributed by Canada. With at least 14 Government organisations involved the major constraint is co-ordination, but the effort to rationalise public expenditure in rural areas will bear fruit in the long term.

The Government plans to extend DRI programmes to another nine provinces, taking marketing and technical assistance, credit and training to 87,000 peasant families. Many more will benefit from improved physical and social

infrastructures.

Successes in increasing yields of such crops as maize, manioc, sorghum and beans are still limited to small areas, and Colombia will be importing more than 300,000 tonnes of maize, sorghum and beans during this half of the year. Food shortages and price rises are an important component of the inflation rate, and, conversely, bad management oversupplies the market at certain times, cutting back farmers' earnings and discouraging investment. As a result the area sown with wheat has been dropping, and though barley production has improved significantly over the last two years, imports are needed to supplement brewery needs. Wheat imports topped \$100m last year and are increasing steadily.

Tropical commercial crops for local industry and for export absorb a large share of agricultural credit and farm investment—the two are far from synonymous because of

the high proportion of credit used as working capital.

Even so, cotton growers and cattle ranchers alike complain of the lack of funds and assistance for long-term improvements such as irrigation, and accuse speculators of buying up good agricultural land in order to "wash" drug money rather than farm.

Erratic

Agricultural products comprise about three-quarters of Colombian exports—though the farm sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product has now dropped below 25 per cent. Coffee is the main export, followed by bananas (\$85m in 1979), flowers (\$80m), cotton (\$51m), sugar (\$47m), rice (\$30m) and tobacco (\$25m). Beef exports have been erratic, falling from \$50m in 1978 to \$31m last year, and many thousands of cattle are smuggled across the border to Venezuela every year. Foot-and-mouth and other

cattle diseases, as well as the lack of freezing plants, have undermined Colombia's attempts to expand meat exports. The ranchers, who traditionally subsidised local sales with international earnings, now speak of serious losses. Prices in the industrial heart of the country are at least \$100 higher per animal than on the coast, where the crisis is at its worst. In the eastern plains of Llanos so much has to be spent on elaborate security precautions to prevent rustling that there is little left over for breeding programmes or pasture improvement.

However, the Llanos already supply Bogotá with meat and are commonly known as the capital's larder. Colonists are gradually moving further east towards the Amazon forest and bringing more land into production but the returns are not as good as those on the richer soil of the Andean foothills. Another pioneer area is the extreme north-west around the

Gulf of Uraba, where banana plantations are flourishing. Most of Colombia's banana production now comes from this area, and exports have built up fast, though there are security problems here.

Despite the close attention given to agriculture by organisations involved in studying the Colombian economy, and the constant criticism of Government policies which tackle immediate issues while skirting over fundamental problems, the new national plan gives the sector low priority. The Ministry of Agriculture is streamlining its national credit system and there is talk of giving land reform a fillip (without doing anything to affect confidence and agricultural investment), but most plans call for more of the same policies that have failed to pull farming out of its repetitive crises.

Sarita Kendall

Record coffee exports but the price dips

AFTER NEARLY a hundred and fifty years as a coffee exporter Colombia is still breaking records. Production and exports for the September 1979-October 1980 coffee year topped 12.3m and 11.5m 60-kilo bags respectively, compared with 11.6m and 11.4m of the previous year. Earnings for the first seven months of 1980 were more than \$300m up on last year's record. But despite an excellent harvest the prospects are not as promising. Not only has the international coffee price fallen sharply in recent weeks, world supply conditions ensure that it is likely to stay low in the foreseeable future.

Until severe frosts destroyed a large part of Brazil's coffee in 1975, Colombia's production had remained fairly steady at 7.5m to 8m bags. In 1976/77 it jumped to 8.8m, then a year later to 10.8m, more as a result of changes in varieties and techniques than extensions to the planted area. Although traditional coffee trees still abound, grown in the shade of the bananas and often mixed in with other crops, nearly 300,000 hectares have been planted with higher yielding caturra varieties. Thus 25 per cent of the coffee area now overduces about 60 per cent of the crop and yields are four times higher in the new plantations.

For the smallest growers, who for long formed the backbone of the coffee sector, the investment needed to grow caturra coffee efficiently is crippling,

and many have sold their plots and migrated to the cities.

Colombia's coffee-growing region par excellence is the astonishingly beautiful country around the towns of Manizales and Pereira, between one and two thousand metres up in the Andes. But Antioquia, Tolima and Cundinamarca are also big producers, with together over 35 per cent of the crop, and in all over 1m hectares are dedicated to coffee.

During the last ten years coffee has rarely contributed less than half the country's export earnings. Last year's exports brought in just over \$2bn, or 55 per cent of the total. The U.S. has long been the main market for Colombian milds, though exports to Europe—especially West Germany—have grown the fastest in recent years. As far as processed coffee is concerned, Japan is the biggest buyer, followed by the U.S. but this industry is still relatively small.

Decrease

Coffee growers have been pressing the Government to agree to the elimination of the 16 per cent export tax and to paying a higher internal price. The current rate of 8,732.50 pesos per 125 kilo lot should be raised to at least 10,000 pesos if production is to be kept up, they say. But with the New York price below \$1.30 a lb, a decrease is more likely than

an increase. Private exporters have already been forced out of the market and the coffee growers' federation, Federacafe, is doing all the buying and exporting.

One of the few producing countries to push for international agreements between consumers and producers at times of both high and low prices, Colombia is also one of the prime forces in the Bogotá Group. Created two years ago to defend the interests of producing countries, the group has fathered an organisation called Pancafe, in which Colombia and Brazil each have 8,000 shares, Mexico, Venezuela and Guatemala 2,000 each, and Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras 1,000 apiece.

Pancafe has received a cold shoulder from the U.S. and some other consumers who say its members are contravening the spirit of international agreements by trying to manipulate coffee futures. If a viable new agreement on prices and quotas could be made, though, promised the producers, they would be willing to disband the group.

Federacafe's general man-

ager, Sr. Arturo Gomez Jaramilla, is particularly concerned about falling coffee consumption and the need for producers to sell the coffee-drinking habit. In the U.S. average coffee consumption fell from 2.6 cups a day in 1976 to 1.9 a day in 1979, and this year's hot summer brought it even lower. But there is some good news, too, for West Germans now drink more coffee than beer.

Inside Colombia coffee prices have also risen, but after a sharp drop in 1976 consumption has recovered. The gap between internal and external prices has been narrowed enough to discourage contraband.

Thanks largely to coffee Colombia has international exchange reserves valued at around \$5bn, and the big inflow of coffee dollars has called for some careful economic management over the last five years to avoid rocketing inflation. The Government and Federacafe have worked hand in hand on economic policies, and the strengthening of the National Coffee Fund has made it possible for Federacafe to

support the local price when international rates fluctuate.

Federacafe, which must be one of the most powerful producer organisations in the South American continent, helps to finance other crops in coffee-growing regions, and its provincial coffee committees contribute to local development with the construction of schools and roads as well as provision of electricity and water supplies.

Ephemeral

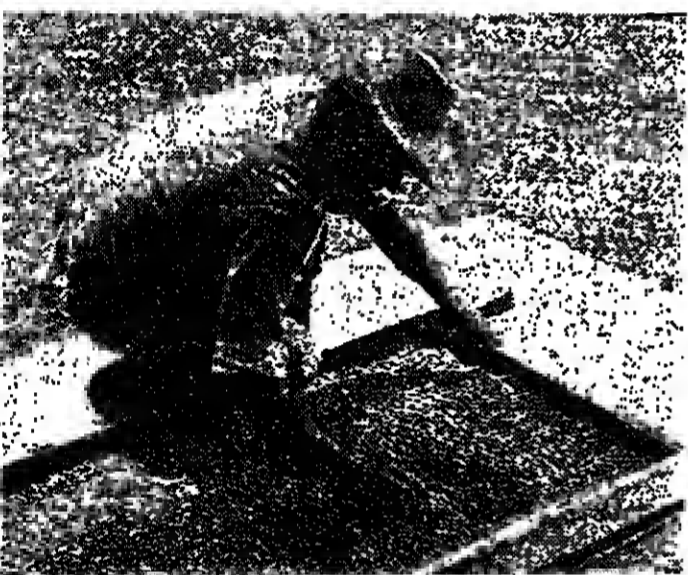
Though the boom of 1975-78 raised incomes in the coffee zones, it also raised local food prices well beyond those in the rest of Colombia, and the benefits of the higher coffee prices proved to be ephemeral. Some 2m Colombians depend on coffee-growing for their earnings and the introduction of the caturra variety, which was speeded up in response to the lure of high prices, is having a considerable impact on both employment and the production of other crops—apart from the direct changes in coffee growing methods.

While the traditional coffee

tree is first harvested at about four months and does on producing for more than 30 years, the caturra tree begins production at two years and must be replaced after ten. Trees are planted closer, far more fertiliser is applied and spraying to control disease is more frequent. Not only is the labour input greater, more capital is needed to finance a caturra plantation—leading to a gradual concentration of production in fewer hands.

Colombian harvests are rarely menaced by frosts. But earthquakes, hail and floods have caused extensive damage to the crop within the last two years—and the greatest menace of all is on its way to the border. Coffee rust has been found in northern Peru, and despite intensive campaigns to stop its advance through Ecuador, experts believe its arrival is inevitable. Colombian agronomists are working to produce a rust-resistant caturra tree, and hope their efforts will be successful enough to ensure that Colombia can go on breaking records.

S.K.



Planting out seedlings of caturra coffee in Risaralda province (top); drying beans near Manizales (below)

Pan-American highway will present daunting problems

COLOMBIA'S GEOGRAPHY is astounding. Three Andean mountain ranges slice north-south through the country, joining near the border with Ecuador to form the massive Cordillera Occidental, the rest of the continent to southern Chile. Roads connecting Bogotá to the other main industrial centres, Medellín and Cali, snake downwards along precipices and across gorges to the Magdalena which is almost at sea level. Then they climb the Central Cordillera, crossing passes at over 3,000 metres and descend to the Cauca Valley. In the eastern plains, or "Llanos", most roads are flooded for several months in the year, and elsewhere storms and landslides ravage surfaces, making repairs a permanent headache.

Hazards

The most difficult road-building task of all is only just beginning: the Pan-American highway system, which runs all through the Americas, has one major gap in it, on the frontier between Colombia and Panama—the Darien Gap, an area of deep swamps and dense jungle. Early this year Colombia's President Turbay and President Aristides Royo of Panama flew over the area and agreed that both countries would forge ahead as fast as possible. But natural hazards are not the only problem to be faced—the region is the home of guerrillas, bandits and drug traffickers, and the army engineering battalion working on the road has to be protected by counter-insurgency troops.

Finance is another stumbling block. Because of U.S. fears that completion of the highway will allow foot-and-mouth disease to spread northwards to the U.S. border, a long-standing commitment to provide one-third of the construction funds has not

been met. By the end of President Turbay's term in 1982, some 68 km should be ready, though the intractable 22 km stretch over the Atrato swamp will still remain.

The National Integration Plan gives, as its name suggests, a high priority to transport investment. Decentralisation, regional autonomy and the integration of the national market are among the plan's main objectives, and funds allocated to the transport sector for the 1979-82 period amount to \$2.2bn.

The lion's share—69 per cent—goes to roads, which carry more than three-quarters of the country's cargo traffic. Colombia has nearly 11,000 km of trunk roads, a meagre allowance for a country measuring over 1m sq km, and about half are surfaced. Steep climbs and narrow sharp bends restrict the size of vehicles, and only relatively low tonnage trucks can be used.

The programme up to 1982 calls for the construction of 550 km of new roads, paving and repaving of 1,721 km and the upgrading of another 1,350 km. In addition, 2,000 km of secondary roads in rural areas are being built to provide access to isolated communities. A petrol tax of 20 per cent goes to the National Road Fund; funds from the national budget and the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank also contribute to road construction. The Government is considering the imposition of toll charges on a number of roads in order to finance improvements.

Bogotá is a less dominant capital than many, the Medellín, Cali and Bogotá regions contribute nearly half the country's Gross National Product and two thirds of industrial production. The only other important industrial area, around the ports of Barranquilla and Cartagena on the Caribbean coast, is well placed for international trade and relatively isolated from the heart of Colombia.

Dredged

A 1,000 km railway connects the coast with the capital, but although it is used for both goods shipments and passenger services, trains on the poorly maintained, narrow gauge line take 24 hours for the journey. However, coastal communications will be much improved once the 873 km road between Bucaramanga and Santa Marta is completed and links up with the trans-Caribbean highway. Key channels along the Magdalena are also to be dredged, providing more reliable, year-round inland access for river traffic.

During the 1970s the proportion of goods travelling by rail dropped from 9 per cent to 5 per cent, and short stretches of line fell out of use. Now, nearly 3,000 km of track is in operation, but only about half of the State-run railway company's rolling stock is available. A major rehabilitation programme is to restore tracks, engines, and goods wagons for use, while studies for a line across the Central Cordillera, involving a very long tunnel, are under way. A new route from Bogotá down to the Magdalena valley is also planned, and yet another line will serve the giant northern coal deposits of El Cerrejón, providing an outlet to a special port 150 km away at Portete.


Air travel has grown rapidly in a country so dissected by big mountains. Seventeen

regional airports take jet aircraft and there are a further 640 local and private strips. Colombia's international airports are notorious for the black stars they receive from international pilots' organisations, and three—Bogotá, Medellín and Barranquilla—are being rebuilt or upgraded. Avianca provides a wide range of national and internal services while Aerocodror, the country's second airline, is now bankrupt and its ex-president is being accused of "mismanagement" nearly \$300,000m. The Ministry of Defence runs Satena, which serves distant, sparsely populated areas such as the Llanos, and several other companies fly local routes.

Public transport in urban areas is provided almost entirely by bus companies, the majority of them privately owned. Bogotá's buses are heavily subsidised, and though a metro route is now being studied, the investment needed—one estimate is \$1bn for a 30km line—would not be recoverable. To try to reduce congestion at key crossroads in the capital, 13 flyovers are being constructed, while some roundabouts are restricted to buses only. A municipal purchase of 200 trolley buses should also reduce overcrowding on public transport.


With most funds destined for improvements to the road network and car ownership rising rapidly, the Government's attempt to limit fuel imports hardly stands a chance. Despite paying lip service to the importance of modes which use less oil fuel, the national plan only allocates 14 per cent of transport investment to water and rail projects. However, road and air services are perhaps better suited to a large country with a widely scattered population, rapidly changing settlement frontiers and formidable natural barriers.

S.K.




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COLOMBIA V

PROFILE: ERNESTO SAMPER

A dedicated enemy of corruption

ERNESTO SAMPER has the reputation of an enfant terrible among Colombian businessmen. At 30, he has been president of the National Association of Financial Institutions for five years, and, by speaking out forcefully on social and political—as well as economic—issues, he has trodden on many establishment toes.

Both lawyer and economist, Senor Samper is especially concerned about the effects of inflation in Colombia: "There is a tendency towards increased concentration of income, rather than distribution. The Government's national plan is inflationary and it will be the middle and low income groups who pay for it—capital avoids taxes only too easily. While salaried employees declare 73 pesos out of each 100 earned, those who live off capital declare only 20."

Referring to professionals and technicians as a "Cinderella middle class," because they are losing so much of their income to inflation and taxes, Senor Samper says that 37 per cent of this group earned under US\$200 a month in 1979, and that unemployment among

qualified technicians is twice the national average.

But most of his energy is currently directed at a more provocative target—marijuana. Two years ago the association began a series of studies on the impact of the marijuana trade in Colombia: "Everyone was talking about marijuana, and all sorts of figures were being quoted, so we decided to do some serious research in the main growing area, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, following up with studies in the U.S." Senor Samper calculates that Colombia's marijuana exports for this year will be worth 10 per cent more than coffee sales—about US\$2.5bn.

Corruption

"Probably the worst effect of the marijuana trade is the corruption it generates—then there are also very serious economic and political effects too, and the harm done to Colombia's image. And the exchange of arms for marijuana is another problem—there's hardly an unarmed peasant in the whole Sierra Nevada."



Ernesto Samper—treading on establishment toes

Last year the association held a seminar on the pros and cons of legalising marijuana, and a surprisingly strong contingent, including the president of Bogota's stock exchange, an ex-head of the security police and several congressmen, turned out to be in favour.

The association is putting up a congressional project which, if it goes through, will decriminalise marijuana and permit Colombia's expensive drug repression apparatus to be cut back. The project would allow growers to produce up to five hectares of marijuana, with the state buying the crop at a price equal to Colombia's best paying legal crop.

Senor Samper says that the next stage—complete legislation

of the international trade—will depend on events in the U.S. but he believes this first project has a good chance and will open up a much broader debate on the alternatives for dealing with the problem.

A completely different venture is also about to get off the ground: Senor Samper is starting a magazine which will concentrate on international themes. "We're very parochial in Colombia, and we need to think about things beyond our own boundaries, and make comparisons." And in the longer term? It would be no surprise to see Senor Samper on the Liberal Party congressional benches.

S.K.

PROFILE: GARCIA PARRA

Putting on the squeeze

"JAIME GARCIA PARRA, Public Enemy Number One of the Colombian People." The poster is still occasionally to be seen on the walls of downtown Bogota, a torn and fading reminder of the time a few months ago when some of the staff of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit went on strike against what they saw as the tightfistedness of their Minister.

But Dr. Garcia Parra has survived worse abuse. Indeed at 48 he could hardly have hoped to get any nearer the top of Colombian politics than he is at the moment. As the financial brain of the Turbay Government he has presided over his Ministry at a time when the foreign reserves of the country have boomed and when foreign investors have never been more eager to put money into the country.

He has also had to suffer the abuse not only of striking civil servants but also of many industrialists and bankers as he fought to bring down inflation from the dangerously high levels of recent years. He is confident that the squeeze on the economy is working and forecast—against the declared opinion of many people, from analysts at the U.S. embassy to bank managers—that inflation this year will be held at under 35 per cent.

Born in the provincial city of Bucaramanga in 1931, he took his first degrees in law and economics in Bogota, going on to Syracuse University in the U.S. and lastly taking a master's in social science at the London School of Economics.

He opted to join the Conservative Party, one of the two traditional political groupings in Colombia.

After jobs representing Colombia at the International Coffee Council in London, at the New Delhi UNCTAD and at the Food and Agriculture Organisation, he got his first ministerial jobs under the bawled system through which Conservatives and Liberals share office.

After a short period at the Communications Ministry he took over the portfolio of Mines and Energy, where he had to grapple with the problems of starting to bring the ridiculously low petrol prices gradually up towards world levels while trying to make the chronically ailing State oil company Ecopetrol more viable, and of setting work going on one of the largest coal deposits in the world, El Cerrejon. In 1976 he signed a contract with Exxon which regulates the U.S. multinational's participation in this \$300 project.

He says that after years of ministerial life he wants to do nothing more than retire to his farm. Few people of course believe that that is where he will end up, for the Conservative Party is not so overflowing in talent and experience that it can afford to overlook Garcia Parra when eventually it comes to take stock of its Presidential candidates for the next term or the one after.

H.O.S.



Oyster fishermen at Tasajeras, on the northern coast

Popayan: a serene contrast to the capital

THE GOVERNMENT of Colombia should make it compulsory for every foreign businessman who has the misfortune to have to spend more than a week in Bogota, the capital, to take a day off in Popayan. They could even subsidise the trip.

The capital is a violent and brusque city. Muggings, robberies, shoot-outs and thefts are a way of life. Bogota and much of the rapidly growing city is in a lamentable physical condition. Visitors, foreign and local, are advised by friends in Bogota not to wear expensive watches in the street lest they be whipped off their wrists; handbags and briefcases should be held tightly whenever one is outside.

No respectable shop or office is without its armed guard. The effect on the visitor is lamentable and foreigners who visit only Bogota must go away with the worst possible impression of Colombia.

Thus the need for the compulsory visit to Popayan. This is a quiet and distinguished colonial city set 5,000 feet up at the top of the valley of the River Cauca. It is all that Bogota is not and the perfect antidote for those who are tempted to think that the Colombian population is made up of equal parts of muggers, thieves, robbers and security guards.

The city is one of the oldest in Colombia. Founded in 1537 by Sebastian de Belalcazar, one of the first of the Spanish conquistadors to colonise the country, it grew rapidly as a trading centre for gold and silver, the precious metals that the Spaniards were keen to send back to their king. Such was the supply of precious metals that the city for a long time supported its own mint which turned out coin of the realm for the Spanish monarchy.

Early on it became a religious centre, too, the seat of first a bishop, and later and to this day the seat of an archbishop. The wealth of the city overflowed into the churches and went to support hundreds of priests and nuns.

Today the mint has gone and coin is no longer struck, but the riches of the church remain in the architecture of half-a-dozen great churches and in the

gold, silver and other treasures that the archbishop has collected together in the Museum of Religious Art.

On the altars of the churches and in the Museum of Religious Art are an infinity of pictures and statues, monstrances, crucifixes, tabernacles and censers in precious metals.

In its long history in Popayan the church received two shocks—one physical, the other political. In 1700 a great earthquake razed most of the city, including its religious buildings. As a result many of them date from no earlier than the eighteenth century but are none the less elegant for that. In the middle of the nineteenth century one of the city's most famous sons, General Cipriano Mosquera, the President, decided to expel the religious orders and as a result many convents and monasteries fell into disuse.

Monastery

One was the Franciscan friary behind the great church of San Francisco. For years, the former monastery was used as barracks and then as a court house before being converted a quarter of a century ago into a very comfortable and friendly hotel, the Hotel Monasterio, which can safely be recommended to any visitor.

The house of the Mosquera family is open to the public as a museum in the care of the University of Cauca, the city's principal place of learning. In the Casa Mosquera are the flamboyant gold encrusted relics of the old general himself and those of his brother who became Archbishop of Bogota and who preferred exile in France to life under the irreligious rule of his sibling.

The Casa Mosquera is only one of a number of great houses still the homes of the richer families of the city, many of which include patios full of flowers, shrubs and trees. The Valencias are one of the leading families of Popayan who have among them given 14 Presidents to Colombia; their house is open to view.

Popayan today is not, it must be said, the power it was when it was when its mint was turning out coin for the Spanish Empire. Nowadays its riches are to be found in the excellent

coffee that grows on its outskirts.

A few years ago high coffee prices brought new wealth to Popayan but this year growers are complaining that the cost of labour and materials combined with falling prices are squeezing them to death. They add that it is only the bigger growers who are going to survive by buying up and merging the small plantations which have been a characteristic of coffee production in the Department of Cauca.

Some shadow of the past riches of the city are to be seen today as the black peasants of the surrounding countryside come in daily to the State-owned Banco de la Republica with their packets of alluvial gold.

At the bank, the manager, Srta. Luz Maria Alvarez, and her staff carefully assay and weigh the gold dust, which is brought in in lots of less than ten grammes. The peasants' gold is the outward sign of the gold rush which has seized Colombia this year, and which should yield the bank \$400m of the metal this year. Though Popayan will provide only a fraction of that, production is rising rapidly.

In the first fortnight of last month Srta. Luz bought in a total of four kilos, about the same as she purchased during the whole of August. "If it gets any hotter I'll have to take on more staff. Three months ago I took on a girl who does nothing but buy gold but she's been overworked."

The normally quiet city becomes animated once a year, in Holy Week, when the streets are alive with processions and pageants similar to those held in Spain's Seville. At the same time the conservatory stages a music festival with up to three concerts a day by local musicians and visitors from Europe and the rest of America.

Srta. Luz, very proud of her city, tells of the Austrian couple who, after living for several years in Popayan, went travelling back to Europe. "They stayed in a number of cities there but they decided after all that life was better anywhere else than in Popayan."

S.K.

PROFILE: GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

Gabo's gadfly wit keeps the press buzzing

THE WRITER who has given greatest world prominence to Colombian literature is better known to many Colombians not as a novelist but as an aggressive gadfly journalist. "One Hundred Years of Solitude," "No-one Writes to the Colonel," and "The Autumn of the Patriarch" have put the name of Gabriel Garcia Marquez on best seller lists everywhere.

But "Gabo" started his career as a newspaper reporter and has made his biggest impact within Colombia over the last few years with articles in a Leftist magazine he founded in 1974, "Alternativa."

One edition last year with a virulent open letter to the President on torture allegations, carried a cover with the single sentence: "I don't believe a word you say, Mr. Turbay." Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Perhaps only his artistic status allowed him to get away with such bare-faced

lese-majeste, but his caustic example has stimulated a whole school of critically witty investigative reporting.

Despite Gabo's repeated injections of capital, Alternativa collapsed in the middle of the year. Its legacy includes the conversion of Macondo into a powerful symbol, even for those Colombians who have never read his books. Macondo is the town of "One Hundred Years of Solitude." Colombian character, history and legend distilled into a dream-world, based on his birth place, Aracataca on the tropical Caribbean coast.

The regular "What's New in Macondo" column in the magazine treated contemporary events with satire, turning "Macondo" into the cult code word for all official incompetence, brutality and absurdity. "Politics and literature are two ways of getting close to reality," said Gabo in one

interview. "Literature journalism and politics are complementary."

Despite his appearances at such international left-wing events as human rights tribunals and revolutionary congresses, highly sympathetic reporting on the Nicaraguan revolution and bombastic threats to write no more novels while General Pinochet rules in Chile, he can be just as explosive on Soviet or Cuban human rights violations.

Nomadism

His present life-style of affluent nomadism between Central America and Europe seems to have done nothing to damage his reputation with the Colombian Left, while the Establishment is eager for his every word. The latest outlet for Gabo is a regular Sunday column in the Liberal El Espectador, the paper for

which he first started writing in 1954.

But publication of his eagerly awaited first column in September proved a new surprise. Instead of the expected bombshell of surrealism or criticism, it turned out to be an intimate essay on novelists and the Nobel Prize, elegantly sketched anecdotes of European literary life. On the same page the leader of a Liberal Party progressive wing wrote a note to welcome Gabo back to the paper, describing him as bringing more world glory to the country than any other Colombian, and as a possible "protagonist in a solution to the chaos of national political difficulties. . . . It would be preferable not to appeal to magic, but sometimes there is nothing else to do."

S.K.

On December 17 the Presidents of the Andean Pact countries meet in Santa Marta, Colombia. To coincide with this important occasion, the Financial Times will publish a major survey on:

THE ANDEAN PACT
DECEMBER 17th

The provisional editorial synopsis is set out below:

1. Introduction: A situation report on the most effective of the various Latin American economic integration schemes. Its origins and administration. Prospects for the future. The political dimension it affects, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.
2. The Andean Development Corporation (CAF): One of the main financial institutions in the region. Its growth and present operations.
3. Central Bank Co-operation: The range and importance of the financial relations between the governments of the region.
4. Decision 24: The origins and rationale of a controversial limitation on foreign investment. The different viewpoints of government and foreign investor.
5. Metal Working: An examination of the integration plans of the metal-working sector in the five member countries. The problems of distributing industry round countries with very varying industrial experience.
6. The Automotive Programme: Welding the five markets into one free trade area in motor vehicles. Distributing the manufacturing in the five member states. Relations with the foreign motor manufacturers.
7. Transfer of technology: The Pact attitude to the purchase and use of foreign technology. Reactions from foreign companies.
8. Transport: Efforts to co-ordinate and develop transport links among the members and speed the transit of goods.
9. Energy: Relations between the member states in the light of the importance of oil, gas and coal production in each country.
10. Diplomatic and Juridical Aspects: The Five attempt to co-ordinate their foreign policies. The experience of dealing jointly with Nicaragua, Cuba and the EEC.
11. Personalities: Brief portraits of leading figures in the Andean Pact.
- 12-16 The National View: How the Pact is viewed in Caracas, Bogota, Quito, Lima and La Paz.

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Guerrilla groups battle on

A U.S. Army colonel once said that if Colombia's guerrilla movements sank their differences and fought together they would provide a real problem for the Government. But attempts to join forces have ended in failure and, separated by mountains and jungles, the guerrilla groups continue to split along political seams.

After the end of the "Violence," a bloody civil war which racked Colombia from 1946 to 1954, a great many peasants buried their guns and went back to farming. Others continued to roam the countryside, fighting for survival rather than any political convictions though they might carry a party label. Some who escaped the bombings of the rebel-administered "independent republics" ignored armistice offers and formed rural guerrilla columns that continue to harass the authorities today.

In the last five years urban guerrilla organisations have been operating in most cities and both their actions and the resulting counter-guerrilla campaigns have had as much an impact on urban residents as have the massive counter-insurgency operations on peasants in rural areas. Kidnaps, bank robberies, weapons seizures, sabotage and publicity stunts by guerrilla groups are common occurrences, as are the subsequent searches, imprisonments and tough security measures.

A guerrilla amnesty is currently being discussed in Colombia's Congress on Government initiative. At the same time the army has had a spate of successes in capturing leading city militants as well as guerrilla base camps in the countryside. The Minister of Defence said recently that 50

soldiers and police and 167 civilians had been killed by rebels since the beginning of last year and that 88 guerrilla fighters had died in combat. He put the total number of guerrillas at over 1,800 not counting urban support networks, but said that this must be a rough estimate.

The biggest group, known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—FARC—grew out of the independent republics and is thought to operate on eight widely scattered rural fronts, ranging from the extreme north-west to the eastern Llanos. Led by the legendary "Tirofijo" the FARC is a pro-Soviet movement assumed to have links with the local Communist Party, and has frequently taken over small isolated towns in order to obtain supplies, carry out armed propaganda and challenge the authorities.

Bombings

Colonists from the FARC-dominated El Pato area south of Bogota marched to Neiva early last month and accused the army of indiscriminate bombing. The Government has refused to interfere with counter-insurgency operations, while the Ninth Brigade's commander has called El Pato a region where "There has been no official Government presence for 14 years."

The Nineteenth of April Movement M-19 announced its birth with a publicity stunt—the robbery of national liberator Simon Bolivar's sword, spurs and epaulettes. An urban group describing itself as nationalist and Socialist but often betraying a mish-mash of ideologies, M-19 has carried out spectacular actions, some of them with a distinct Robin Hood touch. Considerably weakened during 1979 by many

arrests, M-19 nevertheless showed it was far from moribund by dramatically taking 14 ambassadors hostage early this year in the Dominican Embassy in Bogota.

Once the most active of Colombia's guerrilla organisations, the Castro-like National Liberation Army, ELN, now appears to be relatively small. Camilo Torres, a charismatic radical priest joined the ELN in 1965 and was killed soon after, becoming one of the Left's most revered martyrs. Operating in the mountains of north Santander the ELN was responsible for the kidnap from a farm of Britain's Mrs. Teleri

Jones and her son Owain.

Though they are a considerable nuisance to the authorities, private enterprise and normal life are not paralysed. The remaining organisations seem to have a much smaller following. The Maoist Popular Liberation Army EPL is based in rural Antioquia, while an urban EPL group which split from the main organisation has carried out assassinations, bombings and bank raids in cities. The Workers' Self-defence Movement MAO is best known for its killing of ex-Interior Minister Rafael Pardo Rinelvas.

S.K.

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A rethink about rates

BY SIR HORACE CUTLER, LEADER OF THE GLC

ROBIN PAULEY'S assessment (Financial Times, September 15) of Prof. Foster's recent thesis on rates is helpful and informative but it does not take us far along the road to finding a better substitute.

Neither, to be fair, have successive governments. Admittedly, the problem is a difficult one and it may be that in the end we will all have to concede that it is impossible to remedy the defects in the system without creating worse ones; on the other hand, a little radical thought would not come amiss. Rates is an emotive subject. It is also an imprecise one. Information is hard to come by and is usually out of date when you get it. Furthermore, the concept of the average—the average rate-bill, the average rate-payer and so on—is forced upon every discussion of rates and, as ever, the average can disguise the greatest inequalities. However, certain facts are just about beyond dispute:

□ First, an ever-increasing proportion of local authority expenditure has been bespoken, and to a lesser extent met, by Central Government. This is manifested in some unusual ways, not the least of which is the transfer of formerly local authority services to central government agencies.

□ Secondly, notwithstanding this change the burden of rates is heavier than ever before. It may be true that much of this pressure is psychological rather than financial, but it exists none the less.

□ Third, the distribution of the burden as between classes of ratepayer is now subject to distortion, and the distribution of Government aid between authorities leads to further anomalies.

□ Fourth, there is a growing feeling of resentment on the part of that proportion of the population which pays domestic rates against that proportion which does not.

I am wary of quoting figures, especially when they are estimates, but the current year's London rate figures are illuminative.

Net of income from rents, charges and so on—the proper level of which is a subject for another day—this year's spending by London local authorities and the police amounts to about £4.4bn. Of this about £2.4bn is met through Government grants and subsidies, leaving £2bn to fall on the ratepayers.

London has a large concentration of commerce and industry and the result is that the rates paid by the domestic sector total only about £700m, leaving £1.3bn to be collected from the non-domestic sector.

The significance of the sums is two-fold. From a starting point of £4.4bn, which equates to the "social cost" (i.e., excluding charges levied for services) only £700m, 16 per cent, is paid directly by individual Londoners.

The second point is that this bill of £700m is paid by only 2.6m domestic ratepayers, while there are almost exactly twice that number of people in London entitled to vote. This incidentally, is why "free fares" on London Transport is a con!

This country prides itself on its democratic local government; indeed, the autonomy of local government is (rightly) one of the sticking points of the local authority associations against the mechanics of present Government policy although not, on my aide at least, against the policy per se.

What sort of really independent and democratic system is it, though, when the analysis of who pays what out of the "social cost" is:

● 55 per cent—Central Government, wanting an ever-increasing say;

● 29 per cent—Non-domestic ratepayers with no votes;

● 16 per cent—Domestic ratepayers with votes;

● 11—20 per cent equal in number to domestic ratepayers?

It goes without saying that both general taxation and non-domestic rates are met ultimately by the population at large and a respectable case can be made for the assertion that their contribution is related to either their income or their spending, thus rendering the system as "fair" as it may be. That is not really the point, though. The real point is that if "local" is actually to mean "local" (as opposed to "locally-administered") then the "local" element in revenue raising must become a much more significant proportion of the total; furthermore, a way must be found to ensure that local taxes on individuals are fair.

Anyone who at this stage is expecting a blinding flash of revelation is going to be disappointed. I have thought through all the alternative local taxation methods so far suggested and I have had years to digest such awesome authorities in the matter as the Layfield Report. There is something to be said for each of them, just as each has its drawbacks—not the least of which is that no central government ever really likes to loosen the purse-strings and let other bodies compete for the proceeds of taxes.

My conclusion is that no single alternative could work well enough alone; and that combining two or more alternatives is undesirable in principle and difficult in practice.

On the face of it that conclusion should have rendered this piece academic: after all, if there is nothing better why not stick with the status quo? The answer is that all I have ruled out so far is what has been considered; something somewhat more radical, and at this stage necessarily very generalised remains.

Wrong problem

A common failing of government is to produce the wrong "solutions" because the wrong problem has been studied. In this context what is wrong is not the local taxation element within public finance, but public finance itself, and as long as the entire national systems for taxation and benefits remain unreformed it is pointless even to consider rates.

I believe that all sections of our society will agree that our common objective is to ensure that the citizenry benefits from a minimum standard of living (we can and do differ, perhaps,

on where the level is set) whether provided in the form of cash income or public services—or, preferably, by the individual's acceptance of available opportunities.

That objective holds regardless of how an individual has reached an "unfavourable" position—whether a man is unemployed, sick, retired from work or even simply feeless, always recognising that some will, and will want to, slip through the net.

Since we have what amounts to a breadline there seems very little point in maintaining more than one mechanism for ensuring that it applies. Why the rigmarole of National Insurance (income tax in disguise), income tax and so on on the one side, and pensions, social security, unemployment benefit and the like on the other? Why not just one hand to take it away and one to give it out?

In these days of computers a unified tax and benefit system should prove no great problem and, cynical though experience makes me, it also ought to enable savings to be made while offering a better and more comprehensive service.

One other change is essential, though. A great deal is made of the poverty trap where, on the margins of benefit levels, increases in personal income are cancelled out or made worse by benefit reductions. The only way round this which I can see—and something which is essential anyway for the smooth operation of an integrated system—is negative income tax.

This in itself is an enormous subject and outside my present scope. However, it is relevant to rates, with which I started. Once there is a national system of taxation and benefits it is easy to fit a local system into it—without, incidentally, going overboard on central control.

Two elements need to be built in.

One is local authority charges. Some are made now—housing rents, sports fees and a host of minor ones; others could well be made: for refuse collection, for example.

My thinking is that where it is feasible and economic to make a charge it should be made to the user and, if appropriate, provision should be made within the national tax/benefits scheme to offset all or part of the cost against a national tax liability (or increase benefits, if it happens to be that way round). This, in effect, is the present taxation treatment of expenses and rates for businesses.

Where individual bills are not feasible and economic—or are socially undesirable—the costs should be lumped together and charged out to the resident population, whether economically active or not, as a poll-tax. The net cost to the individual under this system is determined solely by his own circumstances and the degree to which the Government is prepared to meet local expenditure by allowing set-offs against tax or benefit levels to rise.

There is actually scope for sweeping reform within this system. For example, the tax



Rateable properties (left): offices, factories and houses. Where some local authority spending goes (right): rubbish collection, transport subsidies and schools.

treatment of owner-occupiers and council tenants can be put more or less on a level footing by charging cost-rents and making suitable allowances against tax: no more arguments about who gets the best deal.

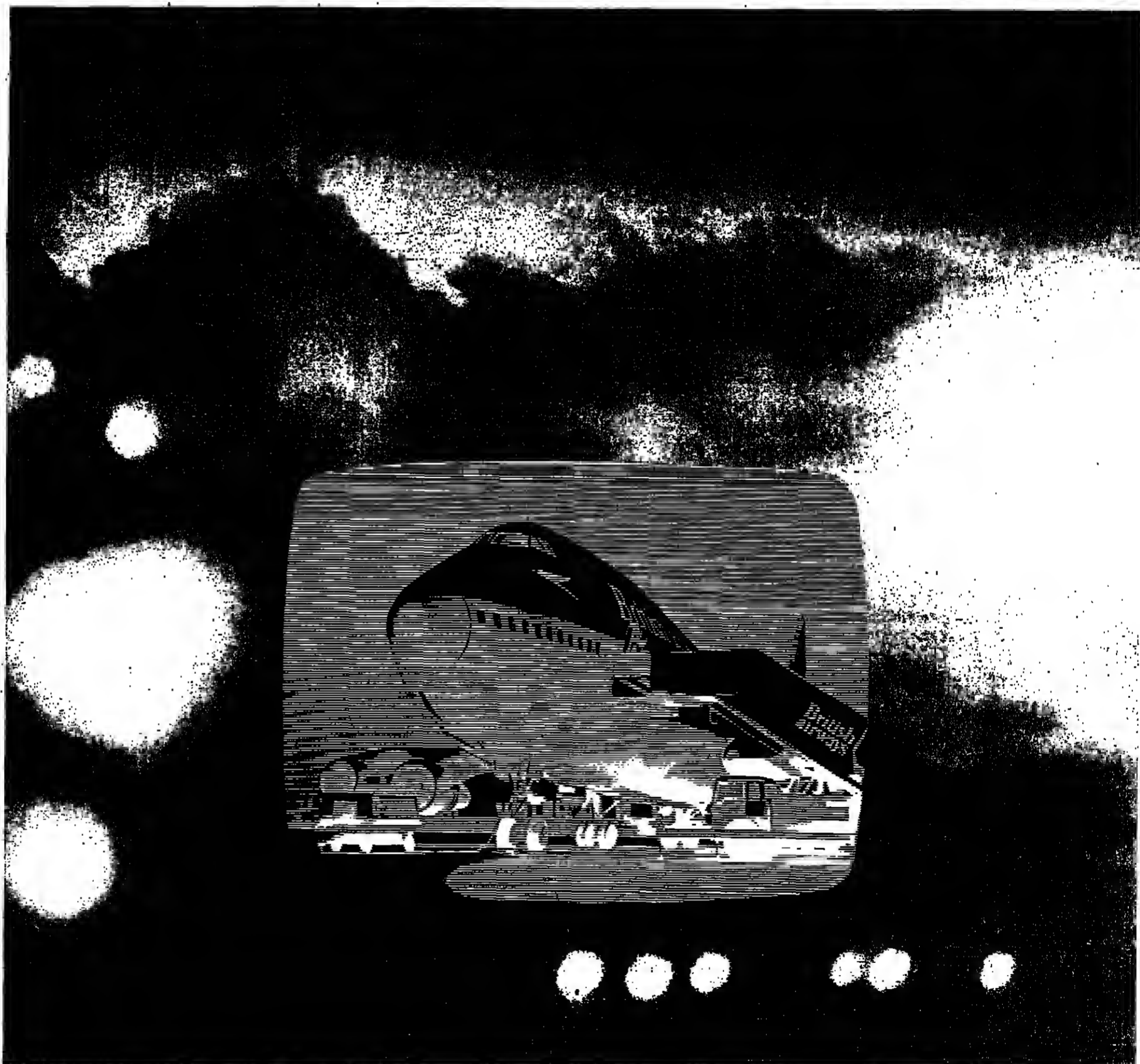
Then again, you could make charges for education—with, in effect, the greatest net contribution coming from those able to pay.

The plus points of the system are that it enables central

government to set and stick to its financial contributions (it merely has to decide on one percentage rate); it leaves local authorities in the position of deciding their own expenditure levels; it provides a certain method of revenue-raising; it means, on the entire population; and, most important, it gives political power locally to those who pay the piper. Both domestic and non-domestic rates

disappear, which is an improvement on official Conservative party policy! Is it a pipedream? I think not. It is certainly not as simple as I have described it, but I am convinced that the major changes—an integrated system and negative income-tax—are necessary anyway, and it needs only a little imagination to build in the rest. I hope it appears on a party conference agenda soon.

PILKINGTON



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CONTRACTS AND TENDERS

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The Tender Documents will be available from 6th October 1980.

Applications for Tender Documents should be made to Kennedy & Donkin, Consulting Engineers, at either of the following offices:

IN UNITED KINGDOM: Premier House, Victoria Way, Woking, Surrey GU21 1DG, United Kingdom. Telex 859373 KDHO G. Hours of business 0900-1700 Monday-Friday.

IN YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC: P.O. Box 947, Sana'a, Yemen Arab Republic. Telex 2410 KENDON YE. Hours of business 0800-1430 Saturday-Thursday.

All applications should state clearly the Tender Document required, the name and postal address to which the Documents are to be sent, and should include the non-refundable fee of US \$50 for each set of Documents. Documents can only be despatched on receipt of the fee.

The closing date for return of the Master and Copy Tenders in Sana'a and copy to Woking is: Noon (local time) on 16th December 1980.

Tenders will be opened in public in Sana'a at the office of the Chairman of Yemen General Electricity Corporation.

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10529 Bardon Hill	12	1.4	8.4
740 County Carr 10.7% Pl.	74	15.3	20.7
628 Oboresh Old	95	5.5	5.8
4489 Frank Mossall	120	7.9	3.0
9836 Fredrick Parker	85	11.0	16.7
1726 George Blair	81	3.1	3.8
2050 Jackson Group	82	8.0	2.3
16700 James Burrough	121	31.3	10.1
3162 Robert Jenkins	310	15.1	6.9
3386 Torday	230	1.4	1.4
2291 Twinkl Oak	11	15.0	18.7
2194 Twinkl 15% ULS	49	3.0	6.8
6286 Unilock Holdings	100	5.7	5.8
12633 Walter Alexander	100	12.1	5.0
5601 W. S. Yeates	240		

† Accounts not quoted under provisions of SSAP 15.

FT Monthly Survey of Business Opinion

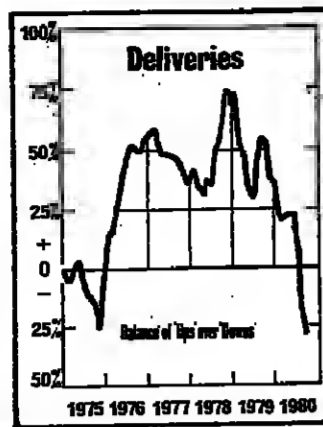
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GENERAL OUTLOOK

Indicator at low level

THERE HAS been little change in the degree of pessimism which businessmen have about the general economic situation in the UK. Consequently, the general business confidence indicator is now at the lowest level it has been at since early in 1974, during the three-day week.

The index of recent deliveries has continued its rapid fall. It is now almost as low as the trough reached in January 1976. All three of the sectors interviewed in this survey—electrical engineering, consumer durables, and stores and consumer



service companies—were more inclined to report reductions in deliveries than last May. This time 20 of the 30 companies said deliveries were down, against only nine companies in May.

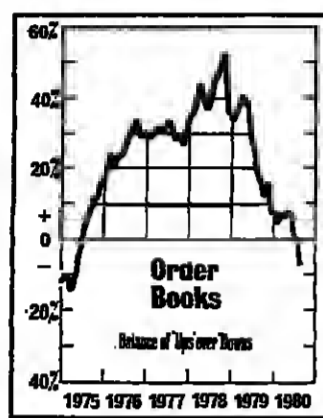
The most heartening news in the survey comes in the area of export prospects, with all three sectors more hopeful of increasing their exports over the next year. Last May attitudes had been particularly negative. Many respondents found the home market so depressing that they were prepared to cut export prices and profit margins to maintain output levels.

ORDERS AND OUTPUT

Sharp decline continues

THE DEEPENING recession continues to show up clearly in falling demand and output. The index of new orders has continued to decline sharply and now stands lower than at any time since October 1975 to February 1976. All sectors covered were more inclined to report reduced order levels than last May.

Order books for all sectors also show some decline, and the indicator has started to move downwards again.



In the area of production/sales turnover all three industry groups expected smaller median increases in turnover over the next 12 months. A number of companies expected turnover increases because of expansion overseas or acquisitions, but one based its forecast on the launch of new models.

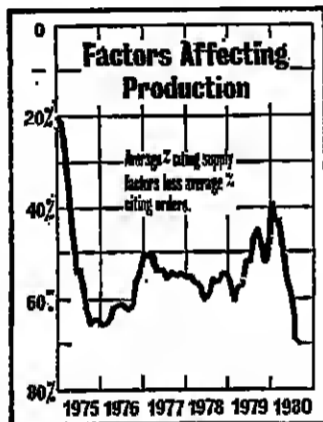
One firm in the durables group thought that the next 12 months would be bleak unless Government policy changed.

CAPACITY AND STOCKS

Uncertainty increases

ALL THREE sectors were more inclined to say that they were working at below planned output levels, and the index has continued to fall. Uncertainty has also continued to rise. Fifteen out of the 30 companies said that they only felt able to plan output levels for three months or less, compared with five companies saying so in May.

Companies continue to mention new factors as affecting output levels, apart from demand. There are some signs that companies are finding that



the cost of finance is beginning to impact output. Despite the high level of unemployment, one electrical engineering firm said that some grades of skilled factory staff were still hard to find, and in durables the same was said of trade mechanics.

All of the sectors were more inclined to say that stock levels were too high than had been the case in the May survey. The two consumer oriented sectors, durables and stores and consumer service companies, tended to expect all types of stock to fall over the next 12 months.

CAPACITY WORKING

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Above target capacity	4	5	6	6	—	—	—
Planned output	34	39	50	62	44	43	34
Below target capacity	59	55	43	31	56	57	49
No answer	3	1	1	1	—	—	17

GENERAL BUSINESS

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Are you more or less optimistic about your company's prospects than you were four months ago?							
More optimistic	16	15	22	23	12	40	25
Neutral	25	27	33	35	44	4	35
Less optimistic	59	58	45	42	44	56	40

EXPORT PROSPECTS (Weighted by exports)

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Over the next 12 months exports will be:							
Higher	50	48	48	49	64	50	20
Same	27	21	20	18	26	29	47
Lower	21	29	30	30	10	21	29
Don't know	2	2	2	3	—	—	4

NEW ORDERS

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
The trend of new orders in the last 4 months was:							
Up	18	25	29	32	20	22	17
Same	15	13	15	18	20	3	30
Down	48	39	29	20	58	58	51
No answer	19	23	27	30	2	17	2

PRODUCTION/SALES TURNOVER

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Those expecting production/sales turnover in the next 12 months to:							
Rise over 20%	3	3	3	3	—	—	17
Rise 15-19%	2	1	5	4	—	—	4
Rise 10-14%	5	3	2	4	30	—	4
Rise 5-9%	10	9	12	21	10	36	9
About the same	64	64	64	57	56	39	58
Fall 5-9%	5	6	4	1	4	—	—
Fall over 10%	6	6	3	3	—	4	4
No comment	5	8	7	7	—	3	4

STOCKS

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Raw materials and components over the next 12 months will:							
Increase	12	20	29	31	10	—	9
Stay about the same	56	51	45	40	58	61	51
Decrease	29	25	21	25	32	39	25
No comment	3	4	5	4	—	—	5
Manufactured goods over the next 12 months will:							
Increase	7	13	20	19	32	—	13
Stay about the same	46	44	46	46	4	40	64
Decrease	21	17	13	19	40	48	17
No comment	26	26	21	16	24	12	4

FACTORS CURRENTLY AFFECTING PRODUCTION

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Homa orders	95	91	87	85	100	100	100
Export orders	55	56	49	48	83	96	17
Executive staff	1	2	4	9	—	—	4
Skilled factory staff	8	8	9	15	20	36	2
Raw materials	6	6	9	15	—	18	4
Production capacity (plant)	8	8	7	9	—	—	13
Finance	6	5	3	1	—	22	4
Others	4	2	4	8	—	43	—
Labour disputes	8	10	8	16	—	—	4
No answer/no factor	3	5	9	8	—	—	—

INVESTMENT AND LABOUR

Lack of demand hits recruiting

WHILE ALL sectors tend to expect that labour forces will fall over the next 12 months, the stores and consumer services group is not quite so pessimistic as it had been last May. In contrast, the vehicles and durables sector is more pessimistic than at the time of the last survey.

Virtually all the respondents said that lack of present or expected demand was discouraging them from increasing labour forces.

None of the companies in the vehicles and durables group expected capital expenditure to increase over the next 12 months in value, let alone



volume terms, and the other two sectors also showed a greater reluctance to increase capital spending. The index is now approaching the point at which as many companies say they expect their expenditure to fall as those which expect it to rise.

Specific projects mentioned include a new refinery, new tooling, automatic assembly machines, a new development in video equipment and a new factory extension in electrical engineering. In the durables sector there were references to plant improvement to reduce costs, a new machine, body tooling and a new plant.

LABOUR REQUIREMENTS (Weighted by employment)

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Those expecting their labour force over the next 12 months to:							
Increase	6	8	8	6	—	—	12
Stay about the same	32	26	30	36	36	9	48
Decrease	60	65	61	55	58	91	40
No comment	2	1	1	3	—	—	—

CAPITAL INVESTMENT (Weighted by Capital Expenditure)

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Those expecting capital expenditure over the next 12 months to:							
Increase in volume	26	30	29	31	57	—	26
Increase in value but not volume	10	14	18	18	—	—	—
Stay about the same	23	18	17	16	1	38	70
Decrease	33	33	32	34	30	27	4
No comment	8	5	4	1	12	35	—

COST AND PROFIT MARGINS

Smaller pay rises expected

ALL SECTORS expect smaller increases in wages than in last May's survey. They are still some way from single figure increases since only two com-

panies expected hourly wages to rise by less than 10 per cent, but a total of 21 out of the 30 expected rises to be less than 15 per cent. This compares with only two firms giving this

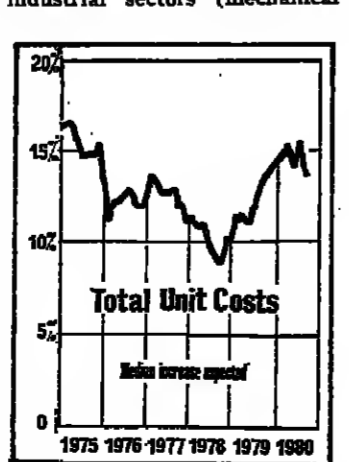
answer last May. The result is that the index for the median expected increase in wages has fallen sharply from 18.5 per cent to 14.8 per cent.

All sectors expected smaller increases in unit costs than they had in May. The prospects for single figure cost inflation are rather better rated than those for wages, with nine companies choosing this option against only two in the May survey.

Both the electrical engineering and durables sectors were more inclined to expect profit margins to fall than they had been in May. However, this was offset by less gloomy expectations on the part of the stores and consumer services sector.

The business opinion survey is carried out for the Financial Times by the Taylor Nelson Group and is based upon interviews with senior executives.

Three sectors and some 30 companies are covered each month in turn. They are drawn from a sample based upon the FT Actuaries index which accounts for about 60 per cent



COSTS

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Wage rise by:							
5-9%	6	4	—	—	20	8	—
10-14%	42	28	20	13	70	88	54
15-19%	35	47	62	64	—	4	17
20-24%	10	13	11	15	10	—	4
No answer	7	8	7	6	—	—	25
Unit cost rise by:							
0-4%	2	1	—	4	20	—	—
5-9%	16	8	6	4	40	22	36
10-14%	31	39	38	30	30	57	17
15-19%	32	35	38	42	10	—	17
20-24%	2	3	3	5	—	—	—
Same	1	—	—	—	18	—	—
Decrease	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
No answer	15	13	15	15	—	3	30

PROFIT MARGINS

4 monthly moving total				September 1980			
June-Sept. %	May-Aug. %	Apr.-July %	Mar.-June %	Elect. Cmpnts. & Eng's Disb'ts. %	Mtr. vehicle %	Stores Cnsmr. Service %	
Those expecting profit margins over the next 12 months to:							
Improve	19	19	28	42	30	18	17
Remain the same	38	38	30	27	44	7	56
Contract	37	36	35	28	26	71	27
No comment	6	7	7	3	—	4	—

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COMPANY NOTICES

IMPALA PLATINUM HOLDINGS LIMITED

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The annual general meeting of the above company will be held in the board room, Union Corporation Building, 74-76 Marshall Street, Johannesburg, on Tuesday, 11 November, 1980, at 10.00 a.m. The agenda of the meeting will be as follows: (a) to approve the recommendation of the ROBERT FLEMING & CO. LIMITED, Chartered Accountants, Johannesburg, to approve the recommendation of the ROBERT FLEMING & CO. LIMITED,

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Real Estate	72.54
Real Estate	72.54
Reliance Mutual Tandridge Wells, Kent, Eng. Prop. Dept.	296.3
Rothschild Asset Management St. Swithun Lane, London E.C.4	0.426 4356
M.C. Property Fund	72.54
Next acct. period Sept. 30/02	15
Investment Group New Hall Place, Liverpool	051-227 4422
Royal Shield Fd.	202.8
Sains & Prusser Group C/o St. Helen's Lodge, EC3P 3EP	0.554 8899
Equity Fed. Inv.	75.56
Income Fed. Inv.	72.54
Prop. Fund	72.54
Property Fund	72.54
Real Estate	72.54
Real Estate	72.54
Real Estate	72.54
Arbuthnot Securities (C.I.) Limited P.O. Box 12, St. Helen's, Merseyside	0534 7657
East & Int'l. Fed. Inv.	72.54
Next acct. period Sept. 30/02	15
Sterling Fd.	136.2
History: ECIV 1971	
Equity Fed. Inv.	75.56
Income Fed. Inv.	72.54
Prop. Fund	72.54
Property Fund	72.54
Real Estate	72.54
Real Estate	72.54
Real Estate	72.54

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Abbey Life Assurance Co. Ltd.
1-3 St. Paul's Churchyard, EC4
Equity Fund _____ 144.1
Equity Ass _____ 144.2

[illegible]

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